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THE

WORKS

OF

ARTHUR MURPHY, Esq.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
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July 12, 1866
Gift of
Rev. Henry Baker
of
Worcester.

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FOURTH VOLUME.

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Know your own Mind:

A

COMEDY,

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

——— Pugnat ſententia ſecum;
Quod petiit, ſpernit; repetit quod nuper omiſit;
Æſtuat, & vitæ diſconvenit ordine toto.

HOR.

Ut callidum ejus ingenium, ita anxium judicium.

TACIT.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr. LEWIS.

THROUGH the wide tracts of life, in ev'ry trade,
What numbers toil with faculties decay'd?
Worn out, yet eager, in the race they run,
And never learn——when proper to have done.

What need of proofs? Ev'n Authors do the same,
And rather than desist, decline in fame.
Like Gamesters thrive at first; then bolder grow,
And hazard all upon one desp'rate throw.

This truth to feel, perhaps too much, inclin'd,
Our Bard, long hackney'd, trembles there behind,
Lest he should prove——another VANISH'D MIND.
Long has his play lain hid, suppress'd by fears,
Beyond the critics rule, ABOVE NINE YEARS!
And now he comes, 'tis the plain simple truth,
This night to answer for his sins of youth.

The piece, you'll say, should now perfection bear;
But who can reach it after all his care?
He paints no monsters for ill-judg'd applause:
Life he has view'd, and from that source he draws.

Here are no fools, the Drama's ſtanding jeſt!
And WELCHMEN *now,* NORTH-BRITONS *too may reſt,*
HIBERNIA'S SONS *ſhall here excite no wonder,*
Nor ſhall ST. PATRICK *bluſh to hear them blunder.*
By other arts he ſtrives your taſte to hit,
Some plot, ſome character; he hopes, ſome wit.
And if this piece ſhould pleaſe you like the paſt;
Ye Brother Bards! forgive him:——'tis his laſt.

Loſt are the friends who lent their aid before;
ROSCIUS *retires, and* BARRY *is no more.*
Harmonious BARRY! *with what varied art*
His grief, rage, tenderneſs aſſail'd the heart?
Of plaintive OTWAY *now no more the boaſt!*
And SHAKESPEARE *grieves for his* OTHELLO *loſt.*
Oft on this ſpot the tuneful ſwan expir'd,
Warbling his grief; you liſten'd and admir'd.
'Twas then but fancied woe; now ev'ry Muſe,
Her lyre unſtrung, with tears his urn bedews.

From this night's ſcenes e'n WOODWARD *too is fled,*
Stretch'd by pale ſickneſs on his languid bed,
Nor can THALIA *raiſe her* FAVOURITE'S * *head.*

* Mr. WOODWARD was to have played the part of DASHWOULD: in his laſt illneſs he lamented to the Author, that he could not cloſe his theatrical life with that character: he died a few weeks after the play appeared; for years the life of the comic ſcene, and in his end regretted as a worthy and an honeſt man.

For

For them our Author lov'd the tale to weave;
He feels their loſs, and now he takes his leave;
Sees new performers in ſucceſſion ſpring,
And hopes new poets will expand their wing.
Beneath your ſmile his leaf of laurel grew;
Gladly he'd keep it;——for 'twas giv'n by you.
But if too weak his art, if wild his aim,
On favours paſt he builds no idle claim.
To you once more he boldly dares to truſt;
HEAR, *and pronounce;——he* KNOWS *you will be juſt.*

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

MILLAMOUR,	Mr. LEWIS.
DASHWOULD,	Mr. LEE-LEWES.
MALVIL,	Mr. WROUGHTON.
BYGROVE,	Mr. AICKIN.
Captain BYGROVE, his Son,	Mr. BOOTH.
Sir JOHN MILLAMOUR, Father to Millamour,	Mr. FEARON.
Sir HARRY LOVEWIT,	Mr. WHITFIELD.
CHARLES, Servant to Millamour,	Mr. WEWITZER.

Footmen, &c.

W O M E N.

Lady BELL,	Mrs. MATTOCKS.
Lady JANE,	Miſs DAYES.
Mrs. BROMLEY,	Mrs. JACKSON.
Miſs NEVILLE,	Mrs. HARTLEY.
Madam LA ROUGE,	Miſs AMBROSE.

Know your own Mind.

ACT the FIRST.

Scene, the Houſe of Sir JOHN MILLAMOUR.

Enter Sir JOHN, *and* BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

WHY then I'd marry again, and diſinherit him.

Sir JOHN.

Brother Bygrove, you think too ſeverely in theſe matters.

BYGROVE.

Severely, Sir John? If I had a mind that my ſon ſhould marry, why ſhould not he do as I would have him?

Sir JOHN.

Allowance muſt be made for inclination: The ſucceſs of our children depends upon the manner, in which we ſet them out in the world. They are like bowls which, if deliverd out of hand with a due regard to their bias, our aim is anſwer'd! if otherwiſe, they are ſhort or wide of the mark in view, or perhaps ruſh wildly out of the green.

BYGROVE.

Well argued, truly! he that ſhould obey is to judge for himſelf, and you that are his governor, are to be directed by him.

Sir JOHN.

Why he is chiefly intereſted in the end, and the choice of the means may be fairly left to himſelf. I can't but be tender of George; a plant of my own rearing, and the tree will hereafter be known by its fruit.

BYGROVE.

It is a tree that will bear nothing without grafting; and if I could not inoculate what will make it thrive and flouriſh, it ſhould not incumber a foot of my land.

Sir JOHN.

Your ſyſtem, and mine, differ widely, Brother Bygrove. My ſon is of an enlarged and liberal underſtanding, and I a father of mild authority.

BYGROVE.

Authority!—your ſon's word is a law to you. Now there is my young graceleſs; he is in the army, and why? Becauſe I choſe it. I had a mind he ſhould ſerve; and ſo he went to be ſhot at. No arguing with me. If I ſee any thing wrong, I accoſt him directly: Look ye, Sir, do you think to go on in this faſhion? Not during my life, I promiſe you: I will acknowledge you no longer than you prove worthy; and if you can't diſcern what is befitting you,

you, I at leaſt will judge what is proper on my part.

Sir JOHN.

Well, George and I have lived together as friends. From a boy, I endeavoured to ſubject him rather to his reaſon, than his fears. If any little irregularity happened, he was no ſooner ſenſible of it, than his cheek coloured, and the bluſh of youth not only looked decent, but expreſſed an ingenuous, and well-diſpoſed mind.

BYGROVE.

But the conſequence of all this? Has he a ſettled opinion? a fixed principle for a moment? He is grown up in caprice; his judgment has not vigour to be deciſive upon the mereſt trifle; he is diſtracted by little things, and of courſe is periſhing by little and little.

Sir JOHN.

Oh! no; all from a good cauſe; his knowledge of life occaſions quick reflection: quick reflection ſhews things in a variety of lights. I am not angry. He will ſettle in the world; you will ſee him married before long.

BYGROVE.

In what a variety of lights his wife will appear to him!

Sir JOHN.

I beg your pardon, for a moment. I ſee a perſon there. Charles, Charles, this way.

Enter

Enter CHARLES.

Sir JOHN.

Well, Charles, what is he about?

CHARLES.

Very buſy, Sir, a thouſand things in hand.

BYGROVE.

And all at the ſame time, I'll warrant.

CHARLES.

We have a deal to employ us, Sir.

Sir JOHN.

Have you founded him in regard to what I mentioned laſt night?

CHARLES.

That's what I wanted to tell your Honour. Laſt night, Sir, as he was going to bed, I touch'd upon the ſubject; dropt a hint or two, that it is now time to think of raiſing heirs to himſelf; enlarged upon the comforts of matrimony, and I think with no ſmall degree of eloquence.

BYGROVE.

The fellow is laughing at you.

Sir JOHN.

Well, and how? What effect?

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

A very visible effect, Sir. This morning early, my master rings his bell. Charles, says he, I have been considering what you said last night: I shall pay a visit to the young ladies, and, I believe, I shall marry one of them.

Sir JOHN.

There, Mr. Bygrove; I am for ever obliged to you, Charles. Well, go on.

CHARLES.

I fly immediately to get him his things to dress, and return in an instant. Charles, says he, then tossed himself back in his chair, beat the ground with his heel, and fell a reading. Won't your Honour get ready to visit the young ladies?—The ladies? what ladies, you blockhead?—Lady Bell, and Lady Jane, your Honour, Mrs. Bromley's handsome nieces. Po! you're a numskull, says he, with an oblique kind of a smile; stretched his arms, yawned, talked to himself, and bade me go about my business.

BYGROVE.

I knew it would end so. There is not a crane-neck carriage in town can give a short turn with him. He will continue going on from one thing to another, and end in nothing at last.

Sir JOHN.

This is provoking. Any body with him this morning?

CHARLES.

CHARLES.

He has had a power of people with him, Sir—A commiſſion-broker, to ſell him a company in a marching regiment; the Mayor of a borough, about a ſeat in Parliament. And there are ſeveral with him now, Sir. There is Sir Harry Lovewit, and——

BYGROVE.

Aye! Sir Harry! I am glad he is of age, and that I am no longer his guardian. He has not had a new idea in his head ſince he was five years old, and yet the blockhead affects to be lively. He runs after wits, who do nothing but laugh at him. He repeats ſcraps and ſentences; all memory and no underſtanding; a mere retailer of what falls from other people, and with that ſtock he ſets up for a wit.

CHARLES.

He is with my maſter, Sir; and there is Mr. Malvil, and Mr. Daſhwould, and—(*bell rings*)——He rings, Sir: you will pardon me; I muſt be gone, Sir. [*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

And that fellow, Daſhwould; he is the ruin of your ſon, and of poor Sir Harry into the bargain. He is the Merry Andrew of the town: honour has no reſtraint upon him; truth he ſets at nought, and friendſhip he is ever ready to ſacrifice to a joke.

Sir JOHN.

Po! mere innocent pleaſantry. Daſhwould has no harm in him.

BY-

BYGROVE.

No harm in him? I grant you the fellow has a quick ſenſe of the ridiculous, and draws a character with a lucky hit. But every thing is diſtorted by him. He has wit to ridicule you; invention to frame a ſtory of you; humour to help it about, and when he has ſet the town a laughing, he puts on a familiar air, and ſhakes you by the hand.

Enter Sir HARRY, *laughing violently.*

Sir HARRY.

Oh! ho! ho! I ſhall certainly expire one day, in a fit of laughing.

Sir JOHN.

What's the matter, Sir Harry?

BYGROVE.

What fool's errand brings him hither?

Sir HARRY.

That fellow, Daſhwould, will be the death of me. The very ſpirit of whim, wit, humour, and raillery poſſeſs him.

BYGROVE.

Ay! wit and humour for the meridian of your underſtanding.

Sir HARRY.

By the ſhade of Rablais, he is the moſt entertaining

ing creature! He has played off ſuch a fire-work of wit. I'll tell you what he ſaid this moment.

BYGROVE.

No, Sir, no; if you are a pedlar in ſmart ſayings, and briſk repartees, we don't deſire you to unpack for us.

Sir HARRY.

A plague on him for an agreeable devil! And then the rogue has ſo much eaſe.

BYGROVE.

Yes, the eaſe of an executioner. He puts all to death, without remorſe. He laughs at every thing, as if Heaven intended to make it's own work ridiculous. He has no reliſh for beauty, natural or moral. He is in love with deformity, and never better pleaſed, than when he has moſt reaſon to find fault.

Sir HARRY.

There is a picture of as harſh features as any in Daſhwould's whole collection.

BYGROVE.

But the picture is true. No exaggeration in it.

Sir HARRY.

He gave us a miniature of you, this morning, my dear guardian, and you ſhall have it. Daſhwould has made a diſcovery, Sir John. What reaſon do you think he gives for Mr. Bygrove's railing for ever at your ſon's inconſtancy of temper?

BY-

BYGROVE.

Ay, now! now!

Sir HARRY.

You positively shall hear it. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all rusted to a point, looking directly toward the land of matrimony—

BYGROVE.

Matrimony! now gild the pill with humour, an down it goes.

Sir HARRY.

Dashwould has found you out. Mr. Bygrove's desires being all collected and fixed on matrimony, he rails at the variety of my friend Millamour's whimsies, like Sir George Bumper, with chalkstones on his knuckles, as big as nutmegs, hobbling along and thanking *Doctor Le Fevre* that he has no small humours flying about him.

Sir JOHN.

That's a discovery indeed.

BYGROVE.

Sir John, can you mind what such a fellow as Dashwould says? Every thing that passes through the medium of his fancy appears deformed, as the straitest stick looks crooked in troubled water.

Sir HARRY.

Well dashed out, upon my soul, with tolerable spleen, and some vivacity.

By-

BYGROVE.

Po!—if you had taken my advice, Sir Harry, and renounced his acquaintance long ago, you had been now a young man coming into life, with ſome promiſe of a character. Continue in diſſipation, Sir. For my part, it is a rule with me, neither to give, nor take a joke.

Sir HARRY.

Ho! ho! ho! a pleaſant rule, poſitively—ho! ho! ho! Daſhwould ſhall have it this moment; do you take the conſequence; and in the mean time I'll leave you to the practiſe of your ſocial humour.

[*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

It is ſuch coxcombs as that butterfly, that encourage him to fix his paſquinades upon every man's character. Matrimony!——a licentious——No, Sir John, I ſtill cheriſh the memory of your ſiſter; ſhe was the beſt of wives: 'ſdeath interrupted again by that——No, it's my friend, Malvil; he is a man of true value.

Sir JOHN.

Daſhwould ſays he is a compound of falſe charity, and real malice.

BYGROVE.

And it is enough for you that Daſhwould ſays it. Malvil is a man of honour, Sir; and an enemy to all ſcandal, though wit prove a palateable ingredient in the poiſon.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

Intolerable! there is no being ſafe where he is. A licentious railer! All truth, all morality ſacrificed to a jeſt: nothing ſacred from his buffoonery.

BYGROVE.

I told you, Sir John, how it is.

MALVIL.

Oh! ſuch indiſcriminate ſatire!

BYGROVE.

Yes, the fellow runs a muck, and nothing eſcapes him.

MALVIL.

There is no enduring it. Ridicule is a very unfair weapon, Mr. Bygrove: it is by no means the teſt of truth, Sir John.

Sir JOHN.

Nay, but you are too grave about this matter.

MALVIL.

Too grave! Shall he wantonly ſtab the reputation of his neighbour, and then tell you it was in jeſt? For my part, I had rather throw a veil over the infirmities of my friend, than ſeek a malicious pleaſure in the detection. That's my way of thinking.

Sir JOHN.

I fancy you are right. This ſon of mine does ſo perplex me. *(walks aſide)*

MALVIL.

Pray, Mr. Bygrove, give me leave. I am ſorry to hear certain whiſpers about a friend of ours.

BYGROVE.

About whom? the widow, Mrs. Bromley?

MALVIL.

Oh! no, no; I have a great reſpect for her: though I—Pray don't you think ſhe throws out the lure for a young huſband?

BYGROVE.

For a huſband, yes; but not too young a one: you can ſerve my intereſt in that quarter.

MALVIL.

I know it: rely upon my friendſhip. But have you heard nothing of an eminent Turkey merchant?

BYGROVE.

Mr. Freeport?

MALVIL.

I ſay nothing: I don't like the affair: have you really heard nothing?

BYGROVE.

Not a ſyllable.

MAL-

MALVIL.

So much the better: though it is fit you ſhould be put on your guard. Any money of yours in his hands?

BYGROVE.

Po! as ſafe as the Bank.

MALVIL.

I may be miſtaken. I hope I am: I was in company, the other night; ſeveral Members of Parliament preſent; they did not ſpeak plainly; hints and inuendo's only; you won't let it go any further. His ſeat in the houſe, they all agreed, is perfectly convenient at this juncture. I hope the cloud will blow over.——I ſhall remember you with the widow.

BYGROVE.

One good turn deſerves another: I ſhan't be unmindful of your intereſt.

MALVIL.

There, now you hurt me: you know my delicacy: muſt friendſhip never act a diſintereſted part? I eſteem you, Mr. Bygrove, and that's ſufficient. Sir John, give me leave to ſay, the man who buſies himſelf about other people's affairs, is a pragmatical character, and very dangerous in ſociety.

BYGROVE.

So I have been telling Sir John. But to laugh at every thing is the faſhion of the age. A pleaſant good-for-nothing fellow is by moſt people preferred

to modeſt merit. A man like Daſhwould, who runs on——So! here comes Scandal in folio.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

Sir John, I rejoice to ſee you. Mr. Bygrove, I kiſs your hand. Malvil, have you been uneaſy for any friend ſince?

MALVIL.

Po! abſurd! (*walks away*)

DASHWOULD.

I have been laughing with your ſon, Sir John. Pray, have I told you about Sir Richard Doriland?

BYGROVE.

You may ſpare him, Sir, he is a very worthy man.

DASHWOULD.

He is ſo: great good nature about him: I love Sir Richard. You know he was divorced from his wife; a good fine woman, but an invincible ideot.

MALVIL.

Look ye there now, Mr. Bygrove!

BYGROVE.

My Lady Doriland, Sir, was always counted a very ſenſible woman.

DASHWOULD.

She was ſo; with too much ſpirit to be ever at eaſe,

eaſe, and a rage for pleaſure, that broke the bubble, as ſhe graſped it. She fainted away, upon hearing that Mrs. All-night had two card tables more than herſelf.

BYGROVE.

Inveterate malice!

DASHWOULD.

They waged war a whole winter, for the honour of having the greateſt number of fools thinking of nothing but the odd trick. Firſt, Mrs. All-night kept Sundays; her Ladyſhip did the ſame: Mrs. All-night had forty tables; her Ladyſhip roſe to fifty. Then one added, then t'other; 'till every room in the houſe was cramm'd like the black hole at Calcutta, and at laſt, upon caſting up the account, Sir Richard ſold off fifteen hundred acres, to clear incumbrances.

Sir JOHN.

Ridiculous! and ſo they parted upon this?

DASHWOULD.

Don't you know the hiſtory of that buſineſs?

MALVIL.

Now mark him; now.

DASHWOULD.

Tender of reputation, Malvil!—The ſtory is well known. She was detected with—the little foreign Count—I call him the Salamander—I ſaw him five

times in one winter upon the back of the fire at Bath, for cheating at cards.

MALVIL.

Go on, Sir, abuſe every body. My Lady was perfectly innocent. I know the whole affair: a mere contrivance to lay the foundation of a divorce.

DASHWOULD.

So they gave out. Sir Richard did not care a nine-pin for her, while ſhe was his. You know his way: he deſpiſes what is in his poſſeſſion, and languiſhes for what is not. Her Ladyſhip was no ſooner married to——what's his name?——His father was a footman, and Madam Fortune, who every now and then loves a joke, ſent him to the Eaſt Indies, and in a few years brought him back at the head of half a million, for the jeſt's ſake.

MALVIL.

Mr. Daſhwould, upon my word, Sir,——Families to be run down in this manner!

DASHWOULD.

Muſhroon was his name: my Lady Doriland was no ſooner married to him, but up to his eyes Sir Richard was in love with her. He dreſſed at her; ſighed at her; danced at her; ſhe is now libelled in the Commons, and Sir Richard has a *crim. con.* againſt him in the King's Bench.

MALVIL.

Pſhaw! I ſhall ſtay no longer to hear this ſtrain of defamation. [*Exit.*

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Malvil, muſt you leave us? A pleaſant character this ſame Mr. Malvil.

BYGROVE.

He has a proper regard for his friends, Sir.

DASHWOULD.

Yes, but he is often preſent where their characters are canvaſſed, and is anxious about whiſpers which nobody has heard. He knows the uſe of hypocriſy better than a Court Chaplain.

BYGROVE.

There, call honeſty by a burleſque name, and ſo pervert every thing.

DASHWOULD.

Things are more perverted, Mr. Bygrove, when ſuch men as Malvil make their vices do their work, under a maſk of goodneſs; and with that ſtroke we'll diſmiſs his character.

Sir JOHN.

Ay, very right; my brother Bygrove has a regard for him, and ſo change the ſubject. My ſon, Mr. Daſhwould, what does he intend?

DASHWOULD.

Up to the eyes in love with Lady Bell, and determined to marry her.

Sir JOHN.

I told you ſo, Mr. Bygrove; I told you, you would ſoon ſee him ſettled in the world. Mr. Daſhwould, I thank you; I'll ſtep and confirm George in his reſolution. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

A good natured man, Sir John, and does not want credulity.

BYGROVE.

Ay! there, the moment his back is turned.

DASHWOULD.

Gulliver's Travels is a true hiſtory to him. His ſon has ſtrange flights. Firſt, he was to be a lawyer; bought chambers in the Temple, eat his commons, and was called to the bar. Then the law is a damned dry municipal ſtudy; the army is fitter for a gentleman; and as he was going to the War-office to take out his commiſſion, he ſaw my Lord Chancellor's coach go by; in an inſtant back to the Temple, and no ſooner there, "Po! pox! hang "the law; better marry, and live like a gentle-"man." Now marriage is a galling yoke, and he does not know what he'll do. He calls his man, Charles; ſends him away; walks about the room, ſits down, aſks a queſtion; thinks of ſomething elſe; talks to himſelf, ſings, whiſtles, lively, penſive, pleaſant, and melancholy in an inſtant. He approves, finds fault; he will, he will not; and in ſhort, the man does not know his own mind for half a ſecond. Here comes Sir John.

Enter

Enter Sir JOHN.

DASHWOULD.

You find him diſpoſed to marry, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

I hope ſo; he wavers a little; but ſtill I——

BYGROVE.

Po! I have no patience; my advice has been all loſt upon you. I wiſh it may end well. A good morning, Sir John. (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

Mr. Bygrove, your's: Sir John will defend you in your abſence.

BYGROVE.

If you will forget your friends in their abſence, it is the greateſt favour you can beſtow upon them. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

Did I ever tell you what happened to him laſt ſummer, at Tunbridge?

Sir JOHN.

Excuſe me for the preſent. This light young man! I muſt ſtep, and talk with my lawyer.

DASHWOULD.

I'll walk part of the way with you. A ſtrange medley this ſame Mr. Bygrove: with ſomething like wit,

wit, he is always abuſing wit.——You muſt know, laſt ſummer, at Tunbridge——

Sir JOHN.

Another time, if you pleaſe. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

The ſtory is worth your hearing: a party of us dined at the Suſſex—(*following Sir John*)

Enter CHARLES.

CHARLES.

Mr. Daſhwould! Mr. Daſhwould!

Re-enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter, Charles?

CHARLES.

My maſter deſires you won't go.

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Hey! what going to leave us?

DASHWOULD.

Only a ſtep with Sir John. Strange vagaries in your maſter's head, Charles!—Sir Harry! going to wait upon Miſs Neville, I ſuppoſe. She has beauty, and you have a heart.

Sir

Sir HARRY.

Pſhaw! there you wrong me now! Why will you?

DASHWOULD.

Very well; be it ſo; I can't ſee to be ſure; but take my word for it, you will marry that girl. Come, I follow you.

Sir HARRY.

I muſt not part with you: I had rather loſe the whole College of Phyſicians. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

March on, Sir Harry.——(*turns to Charles*) Did you ever ſee ſuch a Baronet? This fellow, Charles, is as ridiculous himſelf as any of them. [*Exit.*

CHARLES.

Now have I but one man in the houſe, and he will be fifty different men in a moment. Hurry! hurry! nothing but hurry! Get me this; get me that; get me t'other; bring me the blue and ſilver; ſcoundrel! what do you fetch me this for? let me have the brown and gold. A poor ſervant does not know which way to turn himſelf in this houſe.

Enter RICHARD.

CHARLES.

Well, Richard, what are you about?

RI-

RICHARD.

Why a man in a whirlwind may as well tell what he is about. Going to order the coachman to put up. He intends to change his dreſs, and walk to the Temple. [*Exit.*

CHARLES.

What does he mean by talking of the Temple again? I hope we are not going to take to our ſtudies once more. I hate the law: there is not a footman in the Temple has a grain of taſte. All mere lawyers! They have not an idea out of the profeſſion.

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

Richard! Richard! where is he gone?

CHARLES.

What's in the wind now?

ROBERT.

The wind's in another quarter. He has been writing verſes, as he calls them, ever ſince the company left him. He has torn a quire of paper, I believe, and now he wants the carriage directly. [*Exit.*

CHARLES.

Run, and order it. I had rather be a country curate, than go on in this manner. (*bell rings*) What is he at now?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. *(within)*

Charles :——who anſwers there ?

CHARLES.

Ay ; now for the old work.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Is the chariot ready ?

CHARLES.

At the door, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

Do you ſtep to Mrs. Bromley's, and——perhaps it would be better to——No, do you ſtep, Charles, and——you need not mind it——another time will do as well. [*Exit.*

CHARLES.

There again now : this is the way from morning to night.

MILLAMOUR. *(entering)*

The ſooner, the better : I promiſed Sir John, and I will pay this viſit. Lady Bell reigns ſovereign of my heart. That vivacity of mind ! " Quick as her " eyes, and as unfix'd as thoſe."

CHARLES.

She is by far preferable to her ſiſter, your Honour.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Po! you are illiterate in theſe matters. The ſober graces of Lady Jane!—Lady Bell advances like a conqueror, and demands your heart: Lady Jane ſeems unconſcious of her charms, and yet enſlaves you deeper.

CHARLES.

Which of them does your Honour think—

MILLAMOUR.

Which of 'em, Charles? (*reads a paper*)
"I look'd, and I ſigh'd, and I wiſh'd I could ſpeak."

Enter ROBERT.

ROBERT.

Captain Bygrove, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

That's unlucky. I am not at home; tell him I went out an hour ago.

Enter Captain BYGROVE.

MILLAMOUR.

My dear Bygrove, I longed to ſee you. But why that penſive air? Still in love, I ſuppoſe.

[*Exeunt Charles and Robert.*

Capt. BYGROVE.

My dear Millamour, you have gueſſed it. I am in love, and I glory in my chains.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Shall I tell you a ſecret? I ſuſpect myſelf, plaguily. Every thing is not as quiet here as it uſed to be.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Indulge the happy paſſion. Let wits and libertines ſay what they will; there is no true happineſs, but in the married ſtate.

MILLAMOUR.

Why I have thought much upon the ſubject of late, and with a certain refinement, I don't know but a man may faſhion a complying girl to his taſte of happineſs. Virtuous himſelf, he confirms her in her virtue; conſtant, he ſecures her fidelity: and by continuing the lover, inſtead of commencing the tyrant huſband, he wins from her the ſweeteſt exertion of tenderneſs and love. I ſhall moſt poſitively marry. Who is your idol? My dear boy, impart.

Capt. BYGROVE.

There I beg to be excuſed. You know my father. I muſt not preſume to think for myſelf. I muſt contrive ſome ſtratagem to make him propoſe the match. Were it to move firſt from me, I ſhould be obliged to decamp from before the town at once.

MILLAMOUR.

I wiſh you ſucceſs. My reſolution is taken, and with the moſt amiable of her ſex. She romps about the room like one of the Graces; and deals about her wit with ſuch a happy negligence——

Capt.

Capt. Bygrove.

An agreeable portrait, but mine is the very reverſe. That equal ſerenity in all her ways! Wit ſhe has, but without oſtentation; and elegance itſelf ſeems the pure effect of nature.

Millamour. (*aſide*)

I don't know whether that is not the true character for a wife. And pray, what progreſs have you made in her affections?

Capt. Bygrove.

Enough to convince me that I am not quite unacceptable. My dear Millamour, I had rather fold that girl in my arms, than kiſs his Majeſty's hand for the firſt regiment of guards.

Millamour.

I am a loſt man. I ſhall moſt poſitively marry. We will wonder at each others felicity; and be the envy of all our acquaintance.

Enter Dashwould.

Dashwould.

I am as good as my word, you ſee. Moſt noble Captain, your father was here this morning. A good agreeable old gentleman, and about as pleaſant as a night mare. Millamour, whom do you think I met ſince I ſaw you?

Millamour.

Whom?

Dash-

DASHWOULD.

Our friend Beverley, juſt imported from Paris, perfectly frenchified, and abuſing every thing in this country—" Oh! there is no breathing their Eng-" liſh atmoſphere.—Roaſt beef and liberty will be " the death of me."

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha! poor Beverley! I ſaw him, laſt ſummer, at Paris, dreſſed in the ſtile of an Engliſh fox-hunter: he ſwore there was not a morſel to eat in their country; kept an opera-ſinger upon beef-ſtakes and oyſter ſauce; drove to his villa every Saturday in a phaeton, and returned on the Monday, like a young buck, juſt come upon town.

DASHWOULD.

He has done his country great honour abroad.

BYGROVE.

He will ſettle at home now: he is going to be married.

DASHWOULD.

Yes, I hear he is in love, and much good may it do him. I wiſh I may die, if I know ſo ridiculous a thing as love.——" My life!——My ſoul!—— " Hybla dwells upon her lips; extaſy and bliſs! " blank verſe and paſtoral nonſenſe!" In a little time, the man wonders what bewitched him: an arm chair after dinner, and a box and dice till five in the morning, make all the comforts of his life.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true! Love is a ridiculous paſſion indeed.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Do you take up arms againſt me? But a moment ſince, juſt as you came in, he was acknowledging to me——

MILLAMOUR.

No, not I, truly; I acknowledge nothing. Marriage is not to my taſte, I promiſe you. The handſome wife!—ſhe is all affectation; routs, drums, hurricanes, and intrigue!

DASHWOULD.

And the ugly! ſhe makes it up with good ſenſe; pronounces upon wit; and talks you dead with maxims, characters, and reflections.

MILLAMOUR.

And the woman of high birth, ſhe produces her pedigree, as her patent for vice and folly. "Seven's the main," and away goes your whole fortune.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Mere common place.

DASHWOULD.

And the tender maukin! ſhe doats upon you. "Don't drink any more, my dear: you'll take cold "near that window, my love; pray don't talk ſo "much; you'll flurry your ſpirits"—And then kiſſes you before company.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

And the ſick madam! ſhe has the vapours, and finds that ſhe has nerves.——"I wiſh I had none.'——"But it is too true that I have nerves, as "ſlight as ſo many hairs."

DASHWOULD.

Ha! ha! the whole ſex is divided into ſo many claſſes of folly.

MILLAMOUR.

Right! ſo it is. Ha! ha! ha! (*both laugh*)

Capt. BYGROVE.

You play finely into one another's hands.

MILLAMOUR.

Now mark the champion of the ſex!——

DASHWOULD.

Yes; he'll throw down the gauntlet for 'em.

both laughing.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Nay, decide it your own way. Since you won't hear, gentlemen, there is a clear ſtage for you. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

Fare ye well, moſt noble Captain. A facetious companion! did you ever hear him ſay any thing?

MILLAMOUR.

He is in for it; and my father would fain reduce

me to the ſame condition with one of Mrs. Bromley's nieces. A good fine woman, Mrs. Bromley!

DASHWOULD.

Has been! Were ſhe now to rub her cheek with a white handkerchief, her roſes and lillies would go to the clear ſtarcher.

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha! and yet ſhe ſets up for the rival of her nieces.

DASHWOULD.

The young ladies are pretty well in their way too. Lady Bell has a briſk volubility of nothing, that ſhe plays the pretty ideot with: and Lady Jane, a fly piece of formality, ready to go poſt for Scotland, with the firſt red-coat that aſks her the queſtion. We all dine at the Widow's to day, are you to be with us?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, to meet you: the party will be diverting.

DASHWOULD.

Obſerve old Bygrove. He pronounces with rigour upon the conduct of others, and hopes his own follies lie concealed. His whole ſtruggle is to eſcape detection. He hoodwinks himſelf, and thinks he blinds you. Poſitive and dogmatical in his opinions, yet a dupe to the deſigns of others; and flattering himſelf that a peeviſh and cenſorious ſpirit hides every defect, he gives you the full ridicule of his character.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

I have marked him before now.

DASHWOULD.

Mark him with the widow: you will ſee him ſighing for his deceaſed wife and Mrs. Bromley's charms at the ſame time. One eye ſhall weep for the dead, and the other ogle the living.

MILLAMOUR.

Ha! ha!——And then Malvil laying ſiege to Miſs Neville!

DASHWOULD.

Miſs Neville is the beſt of them. Mrs. Bromley has taken her into her houſe, as a poor relation, whom ſhe pities; and her pity is no more than the cruel art of tormenting an unhappy dependant upon her generoſity.

MILLAMOUR.

But ſhe has generoſity. She has promiſed Miſs Neville a fortune of five thouſand pounds.

DASHWOULD.

And ſo the hook is baited for Malvil. The widow flings out that ſnare, to counteract Sir Harry.

MILLAMOUR.

Sir Harry!

DASHWOULD.

Yes; he is in love with Miſs Neville; and the

beſt of the ſtory is, he is afraid I ſhall think him ridiculous. If I ſay the word, and promiſe not to laugh at him, he breaks his mind at once. Miſs Neville ſees clearly that he admires her, and of courſe will never liſten to Malvil. The ſelf intereſted deſigns of that fellow ſhall be diſappointed.

MILLAMOUR.

Admirable! thou art a whimſical fellow. Come, I attend you. A pleaſant group they are all together. It is as you ſay,

Our paſſions ſicken, and our pleaſures cloy;
A fool to laugh at, is the height of joy.

[*Exeunt*,

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT the SECOND.

Scene at Mrs. Bromley's.

Enter Mrs. Bromley, *and* Miſs Neville.

Mrs. Bromley.

WHY, to be ſure, Neville, there is ſomething in what you ſay: one is ſo odd, and ſo I don't know how in a morning.

Miſs Neville.

Certainly, madam; and then people of your turn, whoſe wit overflows in converſation, are liable to a waſte of ſpirits, and the alteration appears ſooner in them.

Mrs. Bromley.

So it does: you obſerve very prettily upon things. Heigho! I am as faded as an old luteſtring to-day.

Miſs Neville.

No indeed, madam, you look very tolerably, conſidering.

Mrs. Bromley. *(aſide)*

Conſidering! ſhe grows pert, I think.——I am glad you think me not altogether intolerable.

Miſs Neville.

Ma'am!

Mrs. Bromley.

Tolerably! ſhe is Lady Bell's prime agent. (*aſide*) Has Sir Harry given you hopes lately?

Miſs Neville.

Sir Harry! I really don't underſtand why he is mentioned.

Mrs. Bromley.

Do you think it will be a match? And have you made up your quarrel with Lady Bell? (*ſits down*)

Miſs Neville.

The ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition reconciles every thing.

Mrs. Bromley.

And is Millamour reconciled to Lady Bell?

Miſs Neville.

There was only a ſlight miſtake, which I explained.

Mrs. Bromley.

Oh! you explained? that was prudently done; I am glad to hear this: and do you think he loves her? Tell me; tell me all. Why? why do you think he loves her?

Miſs Neville.

He cannot be inſenſible of her merit; and the other day he aſked me if you were likely to approve of his propoſing for Lady Bell.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And you told him. ——Well!——what did you tell him?

Miſs NEVILLE.

That you, no doubt, would be ready to promote the happineſs of ſo amiable a young lady.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You told him ſo? (*riſes, and walks about*) And ſo you are turned match-maker: you buſy yourſelf in my family?——Hey!——Mrs. Start-up! you are dizened out, I think: my wardrobe has ſupplied you.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Your pardon, ma'am: I had theſe things in the country, when you firſt ſhewed ſo much goodneſs to me.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

What airs! you know I hate to ſee creatures give themſelves airs. Was not I obliged to provide you with every thing?

Miſs NEVILLE.

You have been very kind; I always acknowledge it.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Acknowledge it! Does not every body know it?

Miſs

Miſs Neville.

Yes, ma'am, I dare ſay every body does know it.

Mrs. Bromley.

That's maliciouſly ſaid: I can ſpy a ſneer upon that falſe face. You ſuppoſe I have made my brags. That's what lurks in your ambiguous meaning. I deſerve it: deliver me from poor relations.

Miſs Neville. (*aſide*)

Now the ſtorm begins! I am ſure I have ſaid nothing to offend you. I am helpleſs, it is true, but your relation, and by that tie a gentlewoman ſtill.

Mrs. Bromley.

I made you a gentlewoman. Did not I take you up in the country, where you lived in the parſonage-houſe, you, and your ſiſter, with no other company to converſe with, than the melancholy tomb-ſtones, where you read the high and mighty characters of John Hodge, and Deborah his wife? While your father's miſerable horſe, worn to a ſhadow with carrying double to the next market-town, limped about, with a dull alms-begging eye in queſt of the wretched ſuſtenance, that grew thriftily between the graves? Did not I take you out of your miſery?

Miſs Neville.

You did, ma'am. (*in a ſoftened tone*)

Mrs. Bromley.

Did not I bring you home to the great houſe?

Miſs

Miſs NEVILLE.

You did, ma'am! (*weeps aſide*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And I am finely thanked for it. Warm the ſnake, and it will turn upon you.

Miſs NEVILLE.

I cannot bear to be inſulted thus! (*aſide*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

So! your ſpirit is humbled, is it?

Miſs NEVILLE.

Give me leave to tell you, madam, that when people of ſuperior fortune, whom Providence has enabled to beſtow obligations, claim a right, from the favours they confer, to tyrannize over the hopes and fears of a mind in diſtreſs; they exerciſe a cruelty more barbarous than any in the whole hiſtory of human malice.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Is this your gratitude?

Miſs NEVILLE.

I could be thankful for happineſs, if you permitted me to enjoy it: but when I find myſelf, under colour of protection, made the ſport of every ſudden whim; I have a ſpirit, madam, that can diſtinguiſh between real benevolence, and the pride of riches.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bromley.

O brave! that is your ſpirit!

Miſs Neville.

A ſpirit, give me leave to ſay, that would rather, in any obſcure corner, ſubmit to drudgery, for a ſlender pittance, than continue to be an unhappy ſubject, for cruelty to try its experiments upon.

(*weeps*)

Mrs. Bromley.

I fancy I have been too violent. After all this ſower, I muſt ſweeten her a little. Come, dry up your tears: you know I am good-natured in the main. I am only jealous, that you don't ſeem to love me.

Miſs Neville.

Were that left to my own heart, every principle there would attach me to you. But to be dunned for gratitude!——

Mrs. Bromley.

You are right; the obſervation is very juſt: I am in the wrong.——Come, let us be friends, I have a great regard for you, Neville. (*walks aſide*) The creature ſhould viſit with me, only ſhe looks ſo well.——How! did not I hear Mr. Malvil's voice? yes, it is he; I am viſible; I am at home; ſhew him in. Walk in, Mr. Malvil.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

To a perſon of ſentiment, like you, madam, a viſit is paid with pleaſure.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You are very good to me. Neville, do you ſtep and bring me the letter that lies upon my table. *(Exit Miſs Neville)* I am obliged to go out this morning. *(ſmiles at Malvil)* She looks mighty well: I have been ſpeaking for you: our ſcheme will take. Sir Harry will not be able to rival you: ſhe will be your reward for all your ſervices to me.

MALVIL.

Your generoſity is above all praiſe, and ſo I was ſaying this moment to Mr. Bygrove: he is coming to wait on you.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

That's unlucky: I wanted to have ſome talk with you: well, have you ſeen Millamour?

MALVIL.

Yes, and I find him apt: I have hopes of ſucceeding.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Huſh!—not ſo loud!—you think me mad, I believe. May I hazard myſelf with that wild man?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Your virtue will reclaim him. I have a friendſhip for Millamour, and that is my reaſon for counteracting the deſigns of my friend Bygrove.—Mr. Bygrove has deſired me to ſpeak favourably of him to your ladyſhip.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! but he kept his laſt wife mew'd up in the country; I ſhould certainly expire in the country.

MALVIL.

Why, I can't ſay much for a country life: you are perfectly right. Rooks and crows about your houſe; fox-hounds in full cry all the morning; the country 'ſquires as noiſy at dinner as their own hounds; diſputes about the game; commiſſioners of turnpikes, juſtices of the peace, and pedigrees of horſes; "Oroonoko, brother to White Surry, got by Briſk "Lightning, his dam by Bold Thunder."—That's the whole of their converſation.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Deliver me! it would be the death of me. But don't tell Mr. Bygrove: amuſe him with hopes.

MALVIL.

He is a very worthy man. I am ſorry to ſee ſome oddities in him; but that is very common in life. Vices always border upon virtues. Daſhwould ſays, ---but there is no believing his ſlander;---he ſays Mr. Bygrove's ſorrow for his deceaſed wife, is all mere artifice, to weep himſelf into the good graces of another. But I don't believe it.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bromley.

I hear him coming. Do you go and take care of your intereſt with Neville.

Malvil.

I obey your commands. *(going)*

Mrs. Bromley.

I ſhall make her fortune five thouſand. Be ſure you ſpeak to Millamour. Go, go; ſucceſs attend you.

[*Exit* Malvil.

Enter Bygrove.

Bygrove. *(bowing)*

Madam!

Mrs. Bromley.

This attention to one in my forlorn ſtate is ſo obliging——

Bygrove.

It is a favour on your part to receive a loſt, dejected, ſprightleſs——

Mrs. Bromley.

I admire your ſenſibility, Mr. Bygrove. That tender look, which you are for ever caſting back to a beloved, but irrecoverable object, ſhews ſo amiable a ſorrow! oh! there is ſomething exquiſite in virtuous affection.

Enter

Enter Miſs Neville.

Is this the letter you want, Madam? (*gives it her*)

Mrs. Bromley.

I thank you, Neville. Yes, there is a luxury in hankering after a valuable perſon, who has been ſnatched away. I have found a pleaſing indulgence in contemplations of that ſort; have not I, Neville?

Miſs Neville.

Ma'am!

Mrs. Bromley.

Ma'am! are you deaf? Are you ſtupid? I was telling Mr. Bygrove, what a taking I was in, when poor dear Mr. Bromley died.

Miſs Neville.

I was not with you then, Ma'am.

Mrs. Bromley.

Was not with me! what memories ſome folks have!—Go, and try if you can recover your memory: leave the room.

Miſs Neville.

Ungenerous, narrow minded woman! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bromley.

Oh! you little know what a profuſion of goodneſs I have laviſhed on that creature. She returns it all with ſullenneſs, with ill-humour; with averſion. She perfectly remembers the affliction I was in, when I loſt the beſt of men.

By-

BYGROVE.

I have had my trials too. Heïgho!

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I beg your pardon: I am recalling your afflictions: you ſhould not give way; you ſhould ſtruggle a little. Heaven knows how I have ſtruggled. I have appeared, indeed, with an air, but it was all ſtruggling. *(looks, and ſmiles)* I could divert you this morning. Do you know that your ſon is in love with Lady Jane?

BYGROVE.

In love! has he ſaid any thing?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I don't know as to that; but I can ſee what is working in his heart. He is above ſtairs now: I don't half like his choice: Lady Bell is the proper match for him, and her fortune is the beſt. An eſtate, you know, muſt come to her, by the family ſettlement. You ſhould direct his choice.

BYGROVE.

This comes of his preſuming to think for himſelf. Has he declared himſelf?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I fancy not; but he hinted ſomething to me, about a match in my family.

BYGROVE. *(looks at her, and ſmiles)*

Why, a match in your family has diverted me of

late—Heigho!—It is the only thing that has entertained me for a long time.

Mrs. Bromley.

I have had my fancies too. I ſhould like to talk further, but I am engaged abroad, this morning. Can I ſet you down? Will you truſt yourſelf with me?

Bygrove.

You encourage a ſmile, Madam.

Mrs. Bromley.

We ſhall be the town talk: but let them talk: what need we mind? I will juſt ſtep and ſay a word to Neville—You ſhould not be too ſolitary.

Bygrove.

So my friends tell me.

Mrs. Bromley.

I ſhall be with you in a moment. (*returns*) Do you know that we are very like each other in our tempers? After all, that is the true foundation of laſting friendſhips. Poor, dear Mr. Bromley! (*going, returns*) It was ſimilitude of temper brought us together; and if ever I could be prevailed upon again, ſimilitude of temper muſt do it. Well, you have diverted me this morning. Here comes your ſon, talk to him now. [*Exit.*

Enter Captain Bygrove.

Bygrove.

Well, Sir, what brings you to this houſe?

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

A morning visit, Sir; merely to kill half an hour.

BYGROVE.

There is nothing I hate so much as hypocrisy. I know your errand; you must pretend to be in love.

Capt. BYGROVE.

I, Sir!

BYGROVE.

What have you been saying to Lady Jane? I thought I had cautioned you against presuming to think for yourself.

Capt. BYGROVE.

You have been very kind in that way.

BYGROVE.

See what comes of your friend Millamour's being left to his own discretion. The ass in the fable, divided in his choice, and still doubting on, till it is too late to resolve, gives but a faint image of him.

Capt. BYGROVE.

And if I, Sir, to avoid his irresolution——

BYGROVE.

You are in the opposite extreme: he thinks too much, and never decides. You never think at all, and so resolve without judgement. Take the advice of your friends before you come here to play the antic tricks of love; to kneel, cringe, fawn, flatter,

and make yourſelf ridiculous. Do you know enough of the world to judge for yourſelf? Can you tell what they are all doing in the gay ſphere of life? The young are all bred up under the veterans of vice and folly. They ſee their mothers with autumnal faces, playing the agreeable, and forgeting that they are no longer young. The men are advanced beyond all former bounds, and the women preſs cloſe after them. A club for the ladies! intrepidity is now the female charm: to compleat their career, there is nothing left but to build a turf Coterie, at Newmarket, and ride their own matches, over the four mile courſe.

Capt. Bygrove.

An admirable picture, Sir; Daſhwould could not colour it higher.

Bygrove.

Daſhwould! an indiſcriminate railer! I ſpeak for your good, and remember, I tell you, you know nothing of the world. After all, Sir; Lady Bell is the perſon I wiſh to ſee you married to;—go, and pay your addreſſes to her. I will ſettle that matter for you: you may then marry the perſon, to whom you have not degraded yourſelf, by pining, ſighing, love verſes, and I know not what.

Capt. Bygrove.

This is all unaccountable to me, Sir. If you will but hear me——

Enter Malvil.

Bygrove.

No, Sir, no; I won't allow you to fetch a ſingle ſigh,

ſigh, till I ſay the word; when I give leave, you may then go and ſigh till your heart is ready to break. I'll hear no more; no parlying with me. Leave the houſe, this moment.

Capt. Bygrove.

I obey. [*Exit.*

Malvil.

I interrupt you.

Bygrove.

No, no; I am glad to ſee you. Well, have you had any opportunity with the widow?

Malvil.

I have; ſhe ſurprizes me a little: ſhe has dropt the maſk. I did not think ſhe had been ſo eager to marry. We had ſome talk about you. You know my heart: I am always true to my friends: I ſee but one difficulty: ſhe will never agree to live in the country.

Bygrove.

The lover need not diſpute that point, whatever the huſband may do hereafter.

Malvil.

Very true; and beſides, though I am not inclined, with the malicious part of the world, to ſuſpect her virtue, yet this town has temptations. It grieves me to ſee the ways of this great city; fine women without principle; friends without ſincerity: marriages

to day, divorces to-morrow; whole eſtates ſet upon the caſt of a die; maſquerades without wit or humour; new comedies that make you cry, and tragedies that put you to ſleep: It grieves me to ſee all this. You are in the right to prefer good ſenſe and tranquility in the country.

Enter Mrs. Bromley, *and* Miſs Neville.

Mrs. Bromley.

I beg your pardon, gentlemen. Neville, mind what I ſay to you: don't let thoſe giddy girls go out in my abſence; to walk in the Green Park, or run to hideous painters, under pretence of ſeeing odious pictures, that they may have an interview with more odious originals. Keep them at home; I will reward your pains. *Allons*,, Mr. Bygrove. (*Exit* Bygrove.) Come, Mr. Malvil.

Malvil.

Had not I better ſtay, and——

Mrs. Bromley.

No, no; come now, you may return to her. [*Exit.*

Malvil. (*to* Miſs Neville.)

You ſee that I am torn from you; but I ſhall return as ſoon as poſſible. [*Exit.*

Miſs Neville.

Tyrannical woman! ſome virtues ſhe has; but they are overſhadowed by their oppoſite qualities. Her love of praiſe, is a groſs appetite of flattery. She

She oppreſſes with kindneſs, and her very civilities are ſure to be diſobliging. Oh! ſtate of dependance! for mere ſupport, to be ſubject every hour to caprice and arrogance!—Is it pride that makes me feel with this ſenſibillty?—No, my heart can anſwer it is not. I can bow to the hand that relieves me; but I cannot ſtoop to the ſervile office of pampering vanity and oſtentation, with low and fulſome flattery. What does Lady Bell mean by talking to me of Sir Harry? She does it——I know her goodneſs——ſhe does it to ſoften affliction, and, if poſſible, divert a mind, depreſſed with ſorrow. Sir Harry never threw away a thought on me. He behaves, indeed, with marked civility; but I don't know what to think of him. I muſt not aſpire too high: no, I have no pretenſions.

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady JANE.

Miſs Neville, I am very angry with you. What is the matter? Has any thing made you uneaſy?

Miſs NEVILLE.

No; I am not remarkable for high ſpirits, you know.

Lady JANE.

Why would not you give us your company? How can you be ſo croſs? That ſiſter of mine is the verieſt madcap!

Miſs NEVILLE.

Lady Bell is rather lively to be ſure.

Lady JANE.

But when ſhe once begins, ſhe hazards every thing, and talks ſometimes like a very libertine.

Miſs NEVILLE.

The overflowing of gaiety, and good humour.

Lady JANE.

I wiſh ſhe would reſtrain herſelf a little. Madam La Rouge is with her : ſhe has the ſweeteſt Point eyes ever beheld. I was endeavouring to cheapen it, but Lady Bell was ſo troubleſome ; ſhe called me a thouſand prudes, and will have it that nothing runs in my head, but a lover.

Miſs NEVILLE.

I don't know but ſhe may be right. We are apt to deceive ourſelves. We talk of vapours, and fidgets, and retirement, but it is often artful, ſly, inſinuating man, that lurks at the bottom.

Lady JANE.

Well, I vow you'll make me hate you.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Has Captain Bygrove made no diſturbance in your heart ?

Lady JANE.

How can you ? You are as great a plague as my ſiſter. As I live and breathe, the giddy romp is coming. You muſt take my part.

Enter

Enter Lady Bell.

Lady Bell. (*repeating*)

Yes, I'm in love, I own it now,
And Cœlia has undone me;
And yet, I ſwear, I can't tell how,
The pleaſing plague ſtole on me.

What would I give to have ſome miſerable ſwain talk in that ſtyle of me? "Belinda has undone me;" charming!

Miſs Neville.

A lively imagination is a bleſſing, and you are happy, Lady Bell.

Lady Bell.

I am ſo: but then I am not talked of: I am loſing all my time.

Lady Jane.

Why, you bold creature! I hate to hear you talk with ſo much intrepidity.

Lady Bell.

Prudery! my dear ſiſter, downright prudery! I am not for making myſteries of what all the world knows.

Lady Jane.

And how do I make myſteries pray?

Lady

Lady Bell.

Why, you confident thing, I'll prove it againſt you.

Lady Jane.

But what? what? what will you prove?

Lady Bell.

That you are ready to jump out of your little wits for a huſband, my demure, ſober ſiſter. Miſs Neville, a poet is not more eager for the ſucceſs of a new comedy, nor one of his brother poets more deſirous to ſee it fail, than that girl is to throw herſelf into the arms of a man.

Lady Jane.

All ſcandal, ſiſter.

Lady Bell.

Miſs Neville ſhall be judge.

Lady Jane.

Your ſtory is mere invention.

Lady Bell.

Was there ever ſuch a wrangler?

Lady Jane.

You'll not make good your words.

Lady Bell. *(pats her hand)*

Hold your tongue, Miſs, will you?

Lady Jane.

Very well, go on.

Lady

Lady Bell.

Will you have done? Now mind, Miſs Neville. She does not want to be married, ſhe ſays. The other night, my young madam, whoſe thoughts are always compoſed and even, went to ſleep as ſoon as we got to bed, and then her buſy imagination went to work with all the vivacity of an intriguing chamber-maid.

Lady Jane.

And how can you tell that, pray?

Lady Bell.

Out of your own mouth you ſhall be judged. Miſs Neville, ſhe talked in her ſleep, like a beauty in a ſide box, and then fell a ſinging,

No, no; he is true, and I believe;
He look'd, he ſigh'd, he can't deceive;
No, no; I have conquer'd; he is mine;
My heart is touch'd, and I reſign.

Lady Jane.

Oh! you ſcurrilous creature.

Miſs Neville.

Fairly caught, Lady Jane.

Lady Jane.

All odious ſlander; you judge of me by yourſelf.

Lady Bell.

I do ſo. I mean to be married, and am frank enough to own it. But you may let "concealment feed

feed on your damaſk cheek." My damaſk cheek, I hope, was made for other purpoſes.

Lady JANE.

Gracious! there is no bearing this. What a mad girl you are!

Lady BELL.

Not in the leaſt. A natural character. One would not, to be ſure, tell a hideous man that one loves him: but when one has encouraged him by degrees, and drawn him on, like a new glove, and perhaps done him a miſchief in the doing it, why then one would draw him off again, and may be aſk a pretty fellow to help a body; and then the wretch looks ſo piteous, and kneels at your feet; then riſes in a jealous fit. "I take my everlaſting farewell; never "to return; no, never; what to her? who encou- "raged me? encouraged him? who promiſed? "broke her promiſe? The treacherous, faithleſs, "dear, deluding"——then returns in an inſtant; hands dangling; eyes imploring; tongue faultering; "Lady Bell,—Lady Bell—when you know that I "adore you"——And I burſt out into a fit of laughter in his face: oh! that's my joy, my triumph, my ſupreme delight.

Lady JANE.

And is not there a kind of cruelty in all this?

Lady BELL.

Oh! your very humble ſervant, my ſweet Lady Graveairs. Cruelty! The difference between you and me, ſiſter, is this; you deny your love to your female friends, and own it to the man; now I deny it

it to him, but among ourſelves, I fairly own that Miſs Neville is not more impatient to be married to Sir Harry, than I to——

Miſs NEVILLE.

Who, I? Spare me, I beg of you. Why Sir Harry?

Lady JANE.

Now, now, your turn is come. Never ſpare her, ſiſter?

Miſs NEVILLE.

You muſt excuſe me, I am not in ſpirits for all this raillery. *(going)*

Lady JANE.

You ſhan't leave us.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Give me leave; I beg you will. I'll go and talk to Madam La Rouge. Perhaps I may ſucceed for you. [*Exit.*

Lady JANE.

Well, if you muſt go.—How you run on, ſiſter! And are you really in love?

Lady BELL.

Over head and ears.

Lady JANE.

With whom?

Lady

Lady Bell.

Not with Capt. Bygrove: how alarmed you are! With Millamour, ſiſter.

Lady Jane.

Fix that roving temper, if you can; he will be on his knees to you, and the firſt pair of black eyes that enters the room will be through his heart.

Lady Bell.

As to that, I give myſelf very little trouble: but if I could once catch him paying his adoration to me, my aunt Bromley does not raiſe and ſink poor Miſs Neville's ſpirits with ſuch exquiſite ſkill in the art of tormenting, as I ſhould his. I ſhould uſe him as the men do their punch; a little more ſweet; a little more ſower; a little more ſpirit; more acid again; then perhaps ſay it's good for nothing, and then, perhaps——

Lady Jane.

What?

Lady Bell.

Sip it up at laſt, as you would do at firſt. You wicked girl, how could you aſk me ſuch a queſtion? Law! what am I about? I have a thouſand things to do.

Enter Miſs Neville, *and* Madam La Rouge.

La Rouge.

Ah! my Lady! always ſo gay; Engliſh climate no

no effect upon you. *De manieres de Paris* for all de vorl. *En verite, vous eſt charmante.*

Lady BELL.

Oh! Madam La Rouge, you ſay ſuch polite things; but you rob me of all my money. My ſiſter is rich: you had better deal with her. Siſter, you'll be married before me. *(ſings)*

" *No, no, he is true, and I believe, &c.* [*Exit.*

Lady JANE.

Was ever any thing ſo crazy?

LA ROUGE.

It is all *vivacite!* and, my Lady, you have ver great wit *en partage*; *vous avez les graces*; you have de grace; but you no deal vid me.

Lady JANE.

I ſhall call at your houſe in Pall-mall. Miſs Neville, you joined againſt me, I am very angry with you. [*Exit.*

LA ROUGE.

Mademoiſelle, I tell you; perſuade my Lady to have de lace, and you come to my houſe, me give you ver pretty preſent.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Oh! you have a national talent for applying a little bribery.

LA

La Rouge.

Diantre; 'tis falſe delicateſſe. You not know de manieres of the vorl.—*Ah! Monſieur Malvil!*

Enter Malvil.

Malvil.

Madam La Rouge. I did not expect this pleaſure.

La Rouge.

It is always pleaſure to ſee *mes amis*; to ſee my friends; and I glad to ſee you here vid de Lady. You have ver good choice. And I can tell you, make de diſpatch: you have rival.

Malvil.

Rival!

La Rouge.

You not know? Sir Harry have taſte as well as you. Madamoiſelle, you are ver great favourite.

Miſs Neville.

A favourite! keep your vivacity for ſome other ſubject: don't make me the town talk.

La Rouge.

It is ver true: He come to my houſe in Pall-mall, and ſay ver fine ting of Madamoiſelle Neville, and Monſieur Daſhwould praiſe you ver much.

Malvil. (*aſide*)

Ay, his malice is at work.

La

La Rouge.

Monſieur, you loſe all your time—(*goes to him and ſpeaks low.*) You wait de fortune from Madam Bromley: Sir Harry vil take her vidout any money at all. Vat you ſlow for?

Malvil.

Are the apartments kept ready at your houſe?

La Rouge.

De apartment it is ready. You take it two, tree week ago, and pay de rent for noting———I leave you vid de lady; and I go mind mes affaires. Bon voyage. [*Exit.*

Malvil.

I have diſengaged myſelf, to have the honour of attending you.

Miſs Neville.

Your attention is thrown away. Did not I hear Mr. Millamour's voice?

Malvil.

Yes; he came with me; he is gone into the next room to pay his compliments to Lady Jane. I am ſorry to ſee him for ever diſtracted; always reſolving, and yet every day beginning the world over again. You look chagrin'd, what has diſturb'd you?

Miſs Neville.

The old ſtory; Mrs. Bromley's eternal whims.

MALVIL.

She is not ſpoken of as I could wiſh. Good natured and arrogant, generous and cruel, obliging and oppreſſive, at the ſame time.

MISS NEVILLE.

There cannot, ſurely, be a more diſtreſsful ſituation than to remain under daily obligations, and yet not be able to eſteem our benefactreſs.

MALVIL.

Your delicacy charms me: It has fixed me yours. I long for nothing ſo much, as to ſee you out of her power. They have a ſtrange report about town: people will be talking: the whiſper goes that Mr. Bygrove, amidſt all his grief, is ſlily in a hurry for another wife. Mrs. Bromley they ſay, encourages him; and at the ſame time has a deſign upon my friend Millamour.

MISS NEVILLE.

The world is not always wrong.

MALVIL.

Malice will be buſy; and does not ſpare the young ladies.

MISS NEVILLE.

If any thing is ſaid to their diſadvantage, believe me, they do not deſerve it.

MALVIL.

I dare ſay not: I don't think they are too forward.

I am

I am ſorry to ſee, in one of the papers, to-day, a character of Sir Harry, not at all favourable. His little follies, his whims, and caprices one does not mind: He may walk in Daſhwould's train as long as he pleaſes; that only makes him ridiculous. But it grieves me to hear that perfidy ſtains his character, and, as I am told, the worſt of perfidy: the ruin of beauty and innocence, is his ruling paſſion.

Miſs Neville.

This is very odd: ſomebody has been at the trouble of ſending me an anonymous letter to that very effect: and why to me? I am not able to decypher.

Malvil.

I don't like anonymous letters. In general they aim at miſchief, but this perhaps, is meant as a caution to you: it muſt be a friend that ſent it.

Miſs Neville.

No; I can gueſs the quiver from whence that arrow comes.

Malvil.

Daſhwould, perhaps?

Miſs Neville.

I don't ſay that.

Malvil.

Nor I; I never charge any body; but upon recollection, the letter in the news-paper is imputed to him. Mrs. Bromley, I know, has no opinion of Sir Harry. His deſigns, with regard to you, ſhe does

not think honourable. My heart intereſts me for yeu. You know I am all hearr. The plan which Mrs. Bromley has propoſed——Hark! I think I hear Millamour coming. I'll follow you up ſtairs.

Miſs Neville.

Oh! Sir! you have frighten'd me out of my wits. [*Exit.*

Malvil.

She loves Sir Harry, I ſee; and yet ſhe ſhan't ſlip thro' my hands. I can ſet on Mrs. Bromley to lead her a weary life, and if I can prevail upon Millamour to renounce Lady Bell, and marry the widow, my buſineſs is done. When Miſs Neville is heartily tormented by Mrs. Bromley, affliction ſoftens the mind, and I may then decoy her away, and ſtand upon terms with the family. But Daſhwould's wit will fly about. No matter: he is a ſad ſcoundrel, and does not mind how he murders reputations. So! here comes Millamour. I muſt get clear of him, and talk further with Miſs Neville.

Enter Millamour.

Millamour.

From this moment I blot all other woman from my memory. Malvil, wiſh me joy. The perplexity of choice is now at an end.

Malvil.

Why, what has happen'd?

Millamour.

Lovely Lady Jane. And yield her charms of mind

mind with ſweet delay."—I can't ſtay to tell you now.

MALVIL.

Nor will I ſtay to interrupt your raptures. You know, I wiſh you ſucceſs. [*Exit.*

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL. (*reading*)

Who yields too ſoon, muſt ſoon her lover loſe,
Would you reſtrain him long? then long refuſe.

MILLAMOUR. (*looks at her, and ſmiles.*)

There is ſomething commanding in that air of vivacity.

Lady BELL. (*reads*)

" Oft at your door let him for entrance wait,
There let him———

How! Millamour here! how could you ſurprize me ſo? You horrid thing! how long have you been here?

MILLAMOUR.

Been, Madam?—I have been—I have been in the next room, paying my reſpects to your ſiſter.

Lady BELL.

And never enquired for poor Lady Bell?

MILLAMOUR.

Your Ladyſhip wrongs me. You do injuſtice to your own charms: they can never be forgot.

Lady Bell.

I ſee how it is: the other day you was liſted in my ſervice, and now a deſerter to my ſiſter! you are right, you would have been upon hard duty with me.

Millamour.

Any duty but a forlorn hope would be——

Lady Bell.

Hope!—why ſure, you would not have had the intolerable aſſurance, to entertain the ſmalleſt degree of hope? My ſiſter, I ſuppoſe, has given you ſome hope. Ay! that's her way: She moves by ſettled rules, and ſhines with equal light. Now I——I am a mere comet, I blaze of a ſudden; dazzle for a while, then wheel away, and am thought of no more.

Millamour.

That gaiety of hers is charming. (*aſide*) The impreſſion your ladyſhip makes——

Lady Bell.

Words; mere words;—No; I am a ſtrange piece of wild nature; never the ſame for two minutes together. Now, my ſiſter, ſhe is a Pruſſian blue, holds her colour, and is always the ſame.—I—I am a more changeable ſilk—I ſhift about, and diſplay my wit, and my folly, ſo curiouſly blended, that no body can tell where one begins, or the other ends. I am not worth your notice. (*walks, and hums a tune*)

Mil-

MILLAMOUR. (*looking at her*)

She has deſcribed herſelf admirably; without variety, a woman is a downright piece of inſipidity.

Lady BELL.

Yes; I have my whims. Never the ſame for two minutes together. Now I love to give a ſcope to folly, and the men ſay, "curſe catch her, ſhe pleaſes more, when in the wrong, than other women when they are in the right. Then good ſenſe is the word; and the next moment I can't bear the fatigue of thinking; why won't ſomebody write a comedy to divert me? Then all ſpirit, and I long to lead up the ball."

Ladies, like variegated tulips ſhow,
'Tis to their weakneſs all their charms they owe.

(*ſings, and walks about.*)

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide*)

Lady Jane is mere mediocrity compared to her.

Lady BELL.

Lord! I run on at a ſtrange rate. Yours, Mr. Millamour: Au revoir. (*going*)

MILLAMOUR.

A moment longer: you muſt not leave me. You poſſeſs my heart: poſſeſs it without a rival.

Lady BELL.

Hey! what's the matter now?

MILLAMOUR.

Do not trifle with a paſſion ſincere as mine. I

adore you, my Lady Bell; adore your matchleſs charms; thus on my knees adore.

Lady Bell.

Stay, ſtay; let me ſee what the poet ſays, (*reads quick.*)

Oft at your door, let him for entrance wait,
There let him kneel, and threaten and entreat.

There, ſtay there; don't offer to ſtir. Now put up both your hands, and pray, pray, have compaſſion, Lady Bell. [*Exit, laughing.*

Millamour.

She flies diſdainful from her lover's view,
Yet looks and bids him, as ſhe flies, purſue.

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT the THIRD.

Enter Lady JANE, *and* Capt. BYGROVE.

Lady JANE.

AND laid his commands upon you to addreſs my ſiſter?

Capt. BYGROVE.

Moſt peremptorily.

Lady JANE.

You have obey'd him, I hope.

Capt. BYGROVE.

You know your power too well; you know that I am devoted to you, and that my happineſs depends upon the promiſe you have made me.

Lady JANE.

There, that is always the way with you men: our ſmiles, are ſure marks of approbation; and every civil thing we ſay, is conſtrued into a promiſe.

Capt. BYGROVE.

And have not you promiſed?

Lady JANE. (*looks at him, and ſmiles*)

Need I anſwer that queſtion? How eaſily frightened you are! but you have ſome reaſon to be alarmed. Millamour, has been on his knees to me, breathing ſuch raptures——

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Ay!—who has ſet him on?—what can be at the bottom of this?—And have you liſtened to him?—Here comes Daſhwould; he perhaps can explain—

Lady JANE.

He will only laugh at us; and ſo I'll make my eſcape. (*going*)

Capt. BYGROVE.

Not to hear Millamour, again, I hope. (*takes her hand.*)

Lady JANE.

Well, well, to purchaſe my liberty, you need not fear. I have received his vows, delivered with ſuch ardour!—how terrified you look?——I have liſtened to him, to alarm my ſiſter with an idea of Millamour's growing paſſion for me. If her jealouſy is once touched, it may fix her reſolution. At preſent, ſhe is as volatile as Millamour himſelf.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

As volatile as Millamour! what can that be? I never knew any thing that would bear a compariſon.

Lady JANE.

What think you of my ſiſter?

DASHWOULD.

Lady Bell has her whims. I left her above ſtairs, in cloſe conference with Millamour; he has deſerted your Ladyſhip already. Mrs Bromley will be the next,

next, I hope: your father, Captain, would grieve more for that, than for his deceaſed wife.

Lady JANE.

And then Miſs Neville's turn may come.

DASHWOULD.

Oh! no. To ſport with her would be inhumanity. But a briſk widow, is fair game.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Yes, and it may help to cure my father of his folly.

Lady JANE.

It would be ſport, but I deſpair of it. You know, Mr. Daſhwould, you allow that Millamour has underſtanding.

DASHWOULD.

But he does not act from his underſtanding. Fits and ſtarts of paſſion govern him. If in any one purſuit of real uſe, he had half the alacrity of mind, with which he runs on, from one folly to another, he would be a man for the ladies to pull caps for. But he lives for ever in inconſiſtencies. One action of his life is the ſure forerunner of the contrary. Firſt Malvil is his favourite! then arm in arm with me. Can any two things be more oppoſite? It is the ſame among the ladies! they all have him by turns, and the whim of one moment, is ſure to find a ridiculous antitheſis in the next.

Lady JANE.

He ſat for that picture, I'll ſwear.—Well there's a gentleman wants your advice, and ſo I'll leave you together. [*Exit.*

Capt. BYGROVE.

My dear Daſhwould, you muſt aſſiſt me.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

What diſtreſſes you?

Capt. BYGROVE.

My evil genius is at work. You know what my father has reſolved upon. Lady Bell is the perſon he chuſes for me.

DASHWOULD.

I know all that buſineſs: a counterplot of the widow's fertile brain, to diſappoint Lady Bell, and wreak her malice on Millamour.

Capt. BYGROVE.

But the malice falls on me only. Why will not Millamour know his own mind? Lady Bell loves him, I know ſhe does. I am thwarted in the tendereſt point; what muſt be done?

DASHWOULD.

Do as they would have you: you enſure ſucceſs. Millamour's jealouſy takes fire upon the firſt alarm, and while the paſſion holds, he will have vigour enough to act deciſively.

Capt. BYGROVE.

May I hazard the experiment?

DASHWOULD.

It's a ſure card. Take my advice.

Enter Miſs NEVILLE.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Mrs. Bromley's coach has juſt ſtopp'd at the dour: had not you better ſtep up ſtairs, gentlemen?

Enter

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Daſhwould, you are abſent too long. They are all as dull as a funeral, above ſtairs.

DASHWOULD. (*aſide to* Capt. BYGROVE)

How the Baronet follows Miſs Neville from room to room!—Come, Captain, I'll play a game of picquet with you before dinner.—Allons!

[*Exit with* Capt. BYGROVE.

Sir HARRY.

If I might have the liberty, ma'am, to——

Miſs NEVILLE.

Another time, if you pleaſe, Sir Harry. Mrs. Bromley is coming: I hear her voice.

Sir HARRY.

And you promiſe me the hearing?

Miſs NEVILLE.

You are intitled to it, Sir. I beg you'll leave me now.

Sir HARRY.

I obey your commands; I am gone; you'll remember. [*Exit.*

Miſs NEVILLE.

Here ſhe comes; and I think in good humour.

Enter

Enter Mrs. Bromley.

Mrs. Bromley.

Oh! I am heartily tired. I have been paying visits to people who have never been let into my houſe, and who, I hope, will never be at home for me. I hate them all, but out of civility, we muſt keep up an acquaintance. Where are the girls? Has any body been here?

Miſs Neville.

Mr. Millamour, ma'am, and the reſt of the gentlemen that dine here: they are all above ſtairs.

Mrs. Bromley.

Stupidity! did not I give orders——How long has Millamour been here?

Miſs Neville.

About an hour.

Mrs. Bromley.

With Lady Bell, I ſuppoſe——Thou baſe ingratitude! and Sir Harry is here too, I reckon. Does your match go on? You ſhall go back to the country, I promiſe you. You'll be the ruin of thoſe girls. They ſhall have no viſitors, when my back is turned. I'll give orders to all the ſervants this very moment. (*going*)

Enter Sir John Millamour.

Sir John.

To ſee Mrs. Bromley looking ſo well——

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

You are very polite, Sir. Buſineſs calls me now, Sir John; I beg your pardon. [*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

Has my ſon been here to-day?

Miſs NEVILLE.

He is above ſtairs with Lady Bell, Sir.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*within*)

Miſs Neville, Neville, I ſay.

Miſs NEVILLE.

You'll excuſe me, Sir John; what can ſhe want? [*Exit.*

Sir JOHN.

This viſit portends ſome good, I hope. I ſhall be happy if he has declared himſelf. I'll ſtep and ſee what he is about. (*going*)

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Exquiſite! lovely angel!

Sir JOHN.

Well!—how!—what!

MILLAMOUR.

I beg your pardon, Sir; I am not at leiſure; I am

am in the third region; and can't deſcend to the language of the nether world.

Sir JOHN.

Then you are in love, George.

MILLAMOUR.

She is a ſiſter of the Graces, and ſurpaſſes the other three. I am fixed; unalterably fixed; and am going about the marriage articles directly.

Sir JOHN.

They are at my lawyer's, ready engroſſed; and only wait for the lady's name, to fill up the blanks.

MILLAMOUR.

I know it, Sir: I muſt ſtep for them; I have it through my heart: I feel it here: I am your humble ſervant, Sir. (*going*)

Sir JOHN.

No, no; do you ſtay here; I'll ſtep for Mr. Copyhold. The writings ſhall be here in ten minutes.

[*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

The ſooner the better, Sir.

Let thoſe love now, who never lov'd before;
Let thoſe who always lov'd, now love the more.

(*ſings*) Loll, tol, lol.

Enter

Enter MALVIL.

MALVIL.

Bravo! you ſeem in prodigious ſpirits.

MILLAMOUR.

I am ſo: I am happy in myſelf, and happy in my friends, and happy in every circumſtance, and in tip-top ſpirits, and—my dear Malvil, your's down to the ground.

MALVIL.

Methinks, I ſympathize with you. When our friends are happy, the ſenſation is well called a fellow feeling.

MILLAMOUR.

Malvil, I thank you; your turn of mind is formed for laſting friendſhips. With Daſhwould it is all diſſipation, and giddy mirth, the mere bubble of pleaſure. To you, I may talk ſeriouſly. The topic of the day is enough for Daſhwould. I can now tell you, that I ſhall be happy for life. But for Daſhwould, I ſhould have been ſettled long ago. That fellow has led me into a thouſand errors.

MALVIL.

He has his admirers, and not without reaſon. He thinks me his enemy, but he is miſtaken. I never harbour reſentment.

MILLAMOUR.

You are growing grave, and I am a flight above common ſenſe at preſent.

MALVIL.

Daſhwould, notwithſtanding all his faults, does hit the mark ſometimes. I don't uſually laugh at his pleaſantry; I don't like to encourage him too much; but it muſt be owned, he is often right. Behind his back I cannot help being diverted by him. He has a quick inſight into characters.

MILLAMOUR.

No want of penetration there.

MALVIL.

No, no; he ſays, and perhaps rightly, your lively ladies often want common prudence; and giddy in the purſuit of pleaſure, they are frequently miſerable in the end.

MILLAMOUR.

But Lady Bell's good ſenſe, that refinement of underſtanding——

MALVIL.

There are falſe refinements; the ſhadow for the ſubſtance. Who is it that obſerves, we all diſcover early ſymptoms of the diſeaſe, by which our minds and bodies go to ruin?

MILLAMOUR.

Po! with Lady Bell there can be no riſk.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I don't know whether Daſhwould is good authority.—You know him beſt. He ſays——

MILLAMOUR.

Well!

MALVIL.

He is a ſhrewd obſerver.

MILLAMOUR.

Nobody more ſo.

MALVIL.

If he has a regard for any body, it is for you. You are the only man I never heard him ſpeak ill of. A match with Lady Bell is not to his mind. He talked ſeriouſly on the ſubject. Has not he told you?

MILLAMOUR.

Not a ſyllable

MALVIL.

I wonder at that. Lady Bell, he ſays, ſhew'd herſelf early. Impatient of advice, attentive to nothing but her beauty! whole days at her looking glaſs—I repeat his very words—he ſeemed to ſpeak out of downright regard for you.—At her toilette every feature had its inſtructions how to look; but no inſtruction for the mind. And then, ſays he, that terrible love of gaming!

MILLAMOUR.

Gaming!

MALVIL.

Don't you know it? I can't ſay I ever ſaw it myſelf. Time will determine her character.

MILLAMOUR.

If ſhe loves gaming, it is pretty well determined already.

MALVIL.

Perhaps not: I ſtill hope for the beſt.

MILLAMOUR.

Why yes; a man of ſenſe may form her mind, and then the gentler affections may take their turn.

MALVIL.

The very thing I ſaid.—But our pleaſant friend had an anſwer ready—Gentle affections, ſays he! don't you ſee that it is with people that once love play, as with perſons addicted to ſtrong cordials? they never return to cooler liquors.

MILLAMOUR.

There is ſome truth in that. I am for ever obliged to you. It is ingenuous, it is friendly of you to convey the hint.

MALVIL.

Don't build too much upon it. I have told you my author; and you know his way: he may deny it all.

MILLAMOUR.

Shall I talk to him?

MALVIL.

I don't know what to ſay to that. In his vein of pleaſantry, he may give it another turn.

MILLAMOUR.

He may ſo. I am glad to know all this. But my Lady Jane, there's a model for her ſex to imitate.

MALVIL.

Have you watched her well? People ſhould appear what they really are. Let a precipice look like a precipice. When coverd over with flowers, it only ſerves to deceive the unwary. Mrs. Bromley has been very communicative about Lady Jane.

MILLAMOUR.

You alarm me. My dear friend explain.

MALVIL.

To do Lady Bell juſtice, ſhe is above diſguiſe. And tho' ſhe has her faults, I have ſeenher pleaſe by thoſe very faults.

MILLAMOUR. (*ſmiling*)

And ſo have I. Her very blemiſhes are beauty ſpots.

MALVIL.

No frankneſs about the youngeſt girl. It is frind-

ſhip for you that makes me ſpeak. Her character is all forced, ſtudied, put on with her rouge.

MILLAMOUR.

Does ſhe paint?

MALVIL.

A little; the prudent touch. I am ſorry for her. When ſhe is ſettled in the world, many qualities, which now lie concealed, will break out into open day-light.

MILLAMOUR.

What a maſked battery there will be to play off upon a huſband!

MALVIL.

Their aunt told me all in confidence. You may judge how painfull it is to her. I have known the family for ſome time. I can't but be ſorry for the young ladies.

MILLAMOUR.

And ſince this is the caſe, I don't care how little I know of them, or their family.

MALVIL.

No occaſion to quarrel with the family. Great merit about Mrs. Bromley. She made an admirable wife, and that at an early period. She was but ſeventeen when ſhe married.

MILLAMOUR.

No more?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Not an hour: ſhe is not thirty: an eſtate in her own right, and the command of half a borough. No oppoſition there; the old houſes have the votes. A man may get a ſeat without trouble. Does not Sir John want to ſee you in parliament?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes. It would give him pleaſure.

MALVIL.

Well, you will judge for yourſelf. Were I as you, I ſhould know what courſe to take. Here ſhe comes! a good fine woman! a man may there ſit down to his happineſs at once.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mr. Millamour, (*curtſies*) Mr. Malvil, what have you done with Mr Bygrove?

MALVIL.

I parted with him where you ſet us down. (*ſpeaks to her aſide*) I have talked to Millamour, and I think it will do.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Go you up ſtairs. *(aſide to Malvil)*

MALVIL.

How charmingly you look! like Lady Bell's eldeſt ſiſter!

Mrs. Bromley.

Po! you are laughing at me.

Malvil.

Not I truly: I appeal to Millamour. I'll take the liberty to join the company above. (*aſide to Millamour*) She is the beſt of the family. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bromley.

A valuable man Mr Malvil is! He has a great eſteem for you, Sir. His ſincerity is unequall'd, You ſeem thoughtful, Mr. Millamour.

Millamour.

Thoughtful, Ma'am!—There are certain ſubjects that—what Malvil ſays is true—A man may marry her, and ſit down to his happineſs at once. (*aſide*)

Mrs. Bromley.

Sir John has been ſaying a great deal to me about you.

Millamour.

Has he, Ma'am?—There is a circumſtance, which he is as yet a ſtranger to—a circumſtance, which to communicate, will perhaps——It is what I have long wiſhed, and——

Mrs. Bromley.

Faultering! heſitating! (*aſide*) I interrupt you.

Millamour.

There is a circumſtance, Ma'am—the affair is—

My

My father for a long time——Sir John, for a long time——Sir John has wiſhed——

Mrs. Bromley.

To ſee you married?

Millamour.

To ſee me married, Ma'am—and—he has—he has wiſhed it much.—And a ſettlement, by way of jointure—long ready for the Lady's name—that is—any lady, who ſhall honour me with her affection——and——

Mrs. Bromley.

No lady can be inſenſible of your pretenſions.

Millamour.

You are very good, Ma'am; and after long obſervation, and a laſting paſſion grafted on it, which, tho' ſilent hitherto,---yet working ſecretly---when diſcloſed at length---may to the perſon in the world ---who already formed by experience, may in every reſpect---and if without preſuming too far——

Mrs. Bromley.

What a delicate confuſion he is in. (*aſide*)

Millamour.

And if this paper, Ma'am——

Mrs. Bromley. (*taking the paper*)

When given by you, Sir——

Enter

Enter BYGROVE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Perverſe and cruel! (*walks aſide*)

BYGROVE.

You both look grave; nothing amiſs, I hope.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Every thing is as it ſhould be, Sir.

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide*)

Not if he knew all.

BYGROVE.

Sir John has been complaining——

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Paſs that by; adviſe your own ſon; had not you better ſtep up ſtairs? Mr. Millamour will do what is right. (*ſmiling at him*) You may leave it all to him; truſt to his judgement.

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Millamour, I have ſuch a ſtory for you: Malvil and Daſhwould have been quarelling about you, and——

BYGROVE.

Po! and here they all come; I knew the ſubſtance could

could not be far off, when the ſhadow projected before it.

Enter Lady Bell, Dashwould, *and* Malvil.

Lady Bell.

Mr. Daſhwould, do you think I'll bear this? What liberty will you take next? You think, becauſe I laugh, that I am not offended.——Aunt, I received a letter, and he has attempted to ſnatch it from me.

Dashwould.

Why it brings a little cargo of ridicule from the country, and my friend Malvil ſees no joke in it.

Malvil.

When my friend's name is brought in queſtion, Sir——

Lady Bell.

It is diverting notwithſtanding.——Aunt, what do you think? My couſin Cynthia, you know, was to be married to Sir George Squanderſtock; her mother oppoſed it, and broke off the match, and now it's come out, that ſhe was all the time the clandeſtine rival of her own daughter.

Millamour.

Not inapplicable to the preſent buſineſs. *(aſide)*

Mrs. Bromley.

Go, you giddy girl, no ſuch thing!

Mil-

MILLAMOUR. *(aſide)*

She charms by her very faults.

Sir HARRY. (*goes up to* BYGROVE.)

And Daſhwould has been ſaying——

BYGROVE.

Po! repeat none of his ſayings to me.

Lady BELL.

Did you ſay any thing Mr. Daſhwould? What was it?

DASHWOULD.

Oh! nothing. Sir George Squanderſtock is my very good friend.

MALVIL.

And for that reaſon, you might ſpare him. No man is without his faults.

DASHWOULD.

Ay, allow him faults, out of tenderneſs.

BYGROVE.

Sir George is a valuable man, Sir, and repreſents his county to great advantage.

DASHWOULD.

He does ſo; takes a world of pains; nothing can eſcape him; Manilla ranſom not paid; there muſt be a motion about that matter: he knots his hand-

kerchief

kerchief to remember it.---Scarcity of corn! another knot---triennial parliaments---(*knots*) Juries judges of law as well as fact (*knots*) national debt (*knots*) bail in criminal cafes (*knots*) and fo on he goes, till his handkerchief is twifted into queftions of ftate; the liberties and fortunes of all pofterity dangling like a bede roll; he puts it in his pocket, drives to the gaming table, and the next morning his handkerchief goes to the wafh, and his country and the minority are both left in the fuds.

Lady BELL.

What a defcription!

hold hard

Sir HARRY.

Hey! lively Lady Bell!

MILLAMOUR.

Ho! ho! I thank you, Dafhwould.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*afide to* MILLAMOUR.)

How can you encourage him? Let us leave 'em to themfelves.

MALVIL.

You fee, Mr. Bygrove——

BYGROVE.

Ay! thus he gets a ftory to graft his malice upon, and then he fets the table in a roar at the next tavern.

Sir HARRY.

Never be out of humour with Dafhwould, Mr. Bygrove; he keeps me alive; he has been exhibiting pictures

pictures of this ſort all the morning, as we rambled about the town.

DASHWOULD.

Oh! no; no pictures; I have ſhewn him real life.

Sir HARRY.

Very true, Daſhwould: and now mind him; he will touch them off to the life for you.

Mrs. BROLMEY.

Millamour ſo cloſe with Lady Bell! the forward importunity of that girl. *(aſide, and goes to* MILLAMOUR.*)*

DASHWOULD.

There is poſitively no ſuch thing as going about this town, without ſeeing enough to ſplit your ſides with laughing. We called upon my friend Sir Volatile Vainlove: he, you know, ſhines in all polite aſſemblies, and is, if you believe himſelf, of the firſt character for intrigue. We found him drinking Valerian tea for his breakfaſt, and putting on falſe calves.

Sir HARRY.

And the confuſion he was in, when we entered the room!

DASHWOULD.

In the next ſtreet, we found Jack Spinbrain, a celebrated poet, with a kept miſtreſs at his elbow, writing lampoons for the news-paper; one moment murdering the reputation of his neighbours, and the next

next a ſuicide of his own.—We ſaw a young heir, not yet of age, granting annuity bonds, and five Jews, and three Chriſtians, duped by their avarice to lend money upon them. A lawyer——

Sir HARRY.

Hear, hear; it is all true. I was with him.

DASHWOULD.

A lawyer taking notes upon Shakeſpeare: a deaf Nabob raviſhed with muſick, and a blind one buying pictures. Men without talents, riſing to preferment, and real genius going to a jail.—An officer in a marching regiment with a black-eye, and a French hair-dreſſer wounded in the ſword arm.

Sir HARRY.

Oh! ho! ho! by this light I can vouch for every word.

BYGROVE.

Go on, Sir Harry, ape your friend in all his follies; be the nimble marmozet, to grin at his tricks, and try to play them over again yourſelf.

Sir HARRY.

Well now, that is too ſevere: Daſhwould, defend me from his wit. You know I hoard up all your good things.

DASHWOULD.

You never pay me in my own coin, Sir Harry: try now; who knows but you will ſay ſomething?

MAL-

MALVIL.

Friend or foe it is all alike.

Lady BELL. *(coming forward)*

And where is the mighty harm? I like pulling to pieces of all things.

MILLAMOUR. *(following* Lady BELL.*)*

To be ſure it is the life of converſation. Does your Ladyſhip know Sir George Squanderſtock's ſiſter?

Lady BELL.

I have ſeen her.

MILLAMOUR.

She is a politician in petticoats; a fierce republican; ſhe talks of the dagger of Brutus, while ſhe ſettles a pin in her tucker; and ſays more about ſhip-money, than pin-money.

BYGROVE.

And now you muſt turn buffoon?

DASHWOULD.

I know the lady; ſhe ſcolds at the loyaliſts, goſſips againſt the act of ſettlement, and has the fidgets for magna charta.

MILLAMOUR.

She encourages a wrinkle againſt bribery; flirts her fan at the miniſtry, and bites her lips at taxes, and a ſtanding army.

MAL-

MALVIL.

Mr. Bygrove, will you bear all this?

Enter Miſs NEVILLE, *and whiſpers* Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Very well, Neville, I'll come preſently.
[*Exit* Miſs NEVILLE.

MALVIL. (*looking at* Miſs NEVILLE.)

I ſhall ſtay no longer. Mr. Bygrove, will you walk? [*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

No, Sir, I ſhall not leave the enemy in this room behind me: a bad tranſlator of an antient poet, is not ſo ſure to deface his original, as his licentious ſtrain to diſparage every character.

DASHWOULD.

Sir Harry, he will neither give, nor take a joke.

Sir HARRY.

No, I told you ſo.

BYGROVE.

Let me tell you once for all, Sir——

DASHWOULD.

I wiſh you would.

BYGROVE.

Why interrupt? Do you know what I was going to ſay?

DASHWOULD.

No, do you?

MILLAMOUR.

I'll leave 'em all to themſelves. [*Steals out.*

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*aſide*)

Millamour gone! [*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

And what does all this mighty wit amount to? The wit in vogue, expoſes one man; makes another expoſe himſelf; gets into the ſecrets of an intimate acquaintance, and publiſhes a ſtory to the world; belies a friend; puts an anecdote, a letter, an epigram into the news-paper; and that is the whole amount of modern wit.

DASHWOULD.

A ſtrain of moroſe invective is more diverting, to be ſure.

BYGROVE. (*looking about for* Mrs. BROMLEY.)

Well, Sir, we'll adjourn the debate. You may go on; miſrepreſent every thing; if there is nothing ridiculous, invent a ſtory: and when you have done it, it is but a cheap and frivolous talent. Has a lady a good natural bloom? Her paint muſt be an expenſive

penſive article. Does ſhe look grave? She will ſin the deeper. Is ſhe gay and affable? Her true character will come out at the Commons. That is the the whole of your art, and I leave you to the practice of it. (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

Satyrical Bygrove! now the widow has him in tow.

BYGROVE. (*turning back*)

Could not you ſtay till my back was fairly turned? [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

What a look there was!

Lady BELL.

At what a rate you run on! you keep the field againſt them all.

DASHWOULD.

Sir Harry, ſtep up, and watch him with the widow.

Sir HARRY.

I will; don't ſtay too long.

DASHWOULD.

I'll follow you: and hark, make your party good with Miſs Neville.

Sir HARRY.

You ſee, Lady Bell, a fling at every body. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

The Baronet does not want parts; that is to ſay, he has very good materials to play the fool with. I ſhall get him to marry Miſs Neville.

Lady BELL.

Bring that about, and you will for once do a ſerious action, for which every body will honour you.

DASHWOULD.

In the mean time, do you watch your aunt Bromley: ſhe is your rival.

Lady BELL.

Rival? That would be charming.

DASHWOULD.

It is even ſo. Now Millamour's underſtanding is good, but his paſſion's quick: if you play your cards right——

Lady BELL.

Are you going to teach me how to manage a man?

DASHWOULD.

Coquettry will never ſucceed with him. A quickſand does not ſhift ſo often as his temper. You muſt take him at his word, and never give him time to change, and veer about.

Lady BELL.

Totally out of nature.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Oh! very well. I give up the point. [*Exit.*

Lady BELL.

You may leave the man to my management. My aunt Bromley rival me! that would be delightful.

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Well, ſiſter!

Lady JANE.

Can you be ſerious for a moment?

Lady BELL.

Well, the ſolemnity of that look! Muſt I ſet my face by yours, and contract a wrinkle, by a formal œconomy of features, which you, like the reſt of the world, miſtake for wiſdom?

Lady JANE.

Will you hear me? They are hurrying this match too faſt, I think. Sir John is come, and his lawyer is expected every moment. He wants to conclude the affair this day, and my aunt does not oppoſe it. But I don't like all this hurry.

Lady BELL.

And why need you be concerned about it?

Lady JANE.

Do you think Millamour capable of love?

Lady Bell.

For the moment. It will be difficult to fix him.

Lady Jane.

What would you have me do?

Lady Bell.

Do?——Nothing.

Lady Jane.

How ſilly! you know it is not my ſeeking.

Lady Bell.

What are you about? Talking in your ſleep again? Lady Jane, wake yourſelf. What have you taken into your head?

Lady Jane.

Why ſince Mr. Millamour has prevailed with me——

Lady Bell.

His affections then are fixed upon you?——Why the man has been dying at my feet, with a face as rueful as a love elegy.

Lady Jane.

You will permit me to laugh in my turn.

Lady Bell.

Oh! I can laugh with you, and at you, and at him too. This gives ſpirit to the buſineſs: here are difficulties,

ficulties, and difficulties enhance victory, and victory is triumph.

Lady JANE.

Very well! oh! brave! laugh away! you will be undeceived presently.——If this does not take, I am at the end of my line. [*Exit.*

Lady BELL.

What does all this mean? Rivall'd, outwitted by my sister! Insupportable! This begins to grow serious.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

'Sdeath! she here! Sir John is quite impatient, and I am going for his attorney.

Lady BELL.

And Lady Jane is impatient too: she is the object of your choice.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Jane! you are pleasant, very pleasant.

Lady BELL.

She has told me with inflexible gravity!

MILLAMOUR.

She is a great wit; and great wits have great quickness of invention; and so a story is easily dressed up. I could crack my sides with laughing. If trifling civilities have been received as a declaration of love——

Lady BELL.

And is that the caſe? Very whimſical indeed.

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, very whimſical! I am eternally yours, ma'am, and I am on the wing, and your Ladyſhip's adorer. (*going*)

Enter Lady JANE.

Lady JANE. (*aſide*)

Now to plague 'em both.—Sifter, you may hear it from himſelf.

MILLAMOUR.

Confuſion!

Lady BELL.

That lady, Sir, has the ſtrangeſt notion.——

Lady JANE.

You will be ſo good as to explain all to my ſiſter.

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide*)

Both upon me at once.——I have explained, madam, and all further talk about it is unneceſſary.

Lady BELL.

Only to ſatisfy her curioſity.

Lady JANE.

To ſhew my ſiſter her miſtake.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR. (*to Lady Jane*)

I have made every thing clear, ma'am.—(*to Lady Bell*) Have not I, Lady Bell? And a—(*turns to Lady Jane*) every thing now is upon a proper footing.

Lady JANE.

Very well; only give her to underſtand——

MILLAMOUR.

Your underſtanding is admirable. (*turns to Lady Bell*) I told you ſhe would talk in this ſtyle. (*turns to Lady Jane*) You are perfectly right, and nobody underſtands things better. (*turns to Lady Bell*) Nobody whatever. (*looks and laughs at both by turns*)

Lady BELL.

But give me leave. You muſt ſpeak out, Sir.

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide to Lady Bell*)

Never argue about it, it is not worth your while.

Lady JANE.

There is ſome myſtery in all this.

MILLAMOUR.

No; all very clear: (*to Lady Jane*) drop it for the preſent.

Lady BELL.

But I deſire no doubt may remain. } *pulling him by the arm.*

Lady JANE.

And I don't like to be kept in ſuſpenſe. }

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Diſtraction! I am like a lawyer, that has taken fees on both ſides. You do me honour, ladies; but upon my ſoul, I can't help laughing. It will divert us ſome day or other, this will. Oh! ho! ho! I ſhall die with laughing. *(breaks from them)*

Enter MRS. BROMLEY, *and* SIR JOHN.

MRS. BROMLEY.

What is all this uproar for?

MILLAMOUR.

Another witneſs of my folly! *(runs to the other ſide)*

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

Millamour, I give you joy. Mr. Copyhold, your attorney, is come with the deeds. What's the matter?

MILLAMOUR.

The ſtrangeſt adventure! I can't ſtay now. The ladies have been very pleaſant. You love humour, and they have an infinite deal. I'll come to you in a moment. [*Exit.*

SIR JOHN.

George, don't run away: let us finiſh the buſineſs.

DASHWOULD.

If he ſays he'll marry, you may depend upon him

him. A poet, determined to write no more, or a gameſter forſwearing play, is not ſo ſure to keep his word. I wiſh I may die, if I don't think him as much to be relied upon as a prime miniſter.

Lady BELL.

Aunt? Would you believe it? The demure Lady Jane—*(burſts into a laugh)* She has taken ſuch a fancy into her head! Millamour ſhe thinks is up to the eyes in love with her.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Ha! ha! ha! poor Lady Jane!

Lady JANE.

And my ſiſter's pride is hurt. She carries it with an air, as if ſhe had made a complete conqueſt.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

How ridiculous the girls are! your ſon has open'd his mind to you, Sir John?

Sir JOHN.

He has, and I approve of his choice. I hope it is as agreeable to you, as to his father.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I don't know how to refuſe my conſent.

Enter BYGROVE, *liſtening*.

BYGROVE.

What does all this mean?

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

As I could wish. There he is. (*seeing* BYGROVE)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Since it has your approbation, Sir John, I believe I must yield my consent. I never thought to marry again, but since you will have it so——

Sir JOHN.

Lady Bell I understand, is willing to do me the honour of being my daughter in law.

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! ho! this makes amends for all. My dear Aunt Bromley, are you imposed upon? Did you listen to the traitor's vows?——The dear, perfidious? (*laughs violently*)

DASHWOULD.

He will soon be settled, Sir John, since there are now three rival goddesses contending for him. Mr. Bygrove, you are come in good time.

BYGROVE.

What fool's part are you to play now? (*coming forwards*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Sir John, I desire I may not be made your sport. Have not I here, under his hand, a declaration of his mind; here, in this copy of verses, given to me by himself, an earnest of his affection?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Verſes! Aunt?

Lady JANE.

Verſes to you?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Verſes to me: only hear, Sir John. (*reads*)

" *I look'd, and I ſigh'd, and I wiſh'd I could ſpeak,*"
" *And fain would have paid adoration.*"

Lady BELL.

Stay, ſtay; mine begin the ſame way. (*takes out a paper*)

Lady JANE.

The very words of mine. (*takes out a paper*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Will thoſe girls have done? (*reads*)

" *But when I endeavour'd the matter to break,*"

Lady BELL. (*reads*)

" *Still then I ſaid leaſt of my paſſion.*"

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Will you be quiet? (*reads*)

" *Still then I ſaid leaſt of my paſſion;*"
" *I ſwore to myſelf*——

Lady

Lady BELL. (*reads faſt*)

" *And reſolv'd I would try,*

Mrs. BROMLEY, *and* Lady BELL. (*reading together*)

" *Some way my poor heart to recover.*"

Lady JANE, Lady BELL, *and* Mrs. BROMLEY. (*reading eagerly together.*)

" *But that was all vain, for I ſooner could die,*
" *Than live with forbearing to love her.*"

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! ho! Mr. Daſhwould, what a piece of work has he made?

DASHWOULD.

And the verſes copied from Congreve.

Lady BELL.

Copied from Congreve! (*laughs heartily*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

There, Sir John, there is your ſon's behaviour!

DASHWOULD.

There, Mr. Bygrove, there is the widow's behaviour.

BYGROVE.

And now, Mr. Daſhwould, now for your wit.

Mrs.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*to* Sir JOHN.)
I am not diſappointed in the leaſt, Sir.

Sir JOHN.
I never was ſo cover'd with confuſion!

Lady BELL.
I never was ſo diverted in all my days.

DASHWOULD.
He has acted with great propriety upon this occaſion.

Mrs. BROMLEY.
He has made himſelf very ridiculous. He has expoſed nobody but himſelf. Contempt is the only paſſion he can excite. A crazy, mad, abſurd——
(*tearing the paper*)

Lady JANE.
An inconſtant, wild, irreſolute—(*tears the paper*)

Lady BELL.
Ha! ha! ha! ſo whimſical a character. (*kiſſes the paper*)

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*throwing the fragments about*)
This behaviour will give him prodigious luſtre. He will ſhine after this. I hope his viſits will ceaſe at this houſe.

(BYGROVE: *going up to* Mrs. BROMLEY.)

If ever you marry again, ſimilitude of temper muſt do it.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Diſtraction! muſt you plague me too?

BYGROVE.

You have appear'd with an air, but it was all ſtruggling.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

I cannot bear this.

BYGROVE.

Heaven knows how you have ſtruggled!

Mrs. BROMLEY.

And you too? *(mimicks him)* "A match in your family has diverted me of late." I renounce you all. Come, Lady Bell, Lady Jane, and let us leave them to themſelves. [*Exit.*

Lady JANE.

You would not believe me, ſiſter. [*Exit.*

Lady BELL.

Oh! this to me is as good as a comedy. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD, *(to* BYGROVE.)

What ſhall I give you for your chance?

BY-

BYGROVE.

More than I'll give you for your wit. And there's your anſwer. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

The old pike is hooked, and ſtruggles ſtill at the end of her line.

Sir JOHN.

Mr. Daſhwould, ſpeak to this ſilly young man. You have influence over him. Keep him to dinner. You will for ever oblige me. I muſt go and pacify the ladies. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

Poor Millamour! Dryden has painted him to a hair.

Bleſt madman, who can ev'ry hour employ,
With ſomething new to wiſh, or to enjoy.

End of the THIRD ACT.

ACT the FOURTH.

Enter DASHWOULD, *and* Sir HARRY.

DASHWOULD.

THIS way, Sir Harry. While they are all engaged in the pleaſures of the table, I want a word with you in private.

Sir HARRY.

With that face of importance! what is coming now?

DASHWOULD.

Liſten to me: know a little of the ſubject, before you give your opinion.

Sir HARRY.

I am all attention.

DASHWOULD.

Did you mark Miſs Neville, at dinner?

Sir HARRY.

You know I did. And when Mrs. Bromley railed at her———

DASHWOULD.

She railed at her with a littleneſs of ſpirit, that diſgraced wealth and affluence, and gave to poverty the

the ſuperior character. You muſt have ſeen in the behaviour of that girl, though treated with pride and arrogance, a propriety that was elegant, and went even further; it intereſted every heart for her. She is the beſt of the group. Were I, at the head of ſuch a fortune as yours, to chooſe a wife, ſhe ſhould be the object of my affection.

Sir HARRY.

You have ſome ſcheme in all this.

DASHWOULD.

I have; to ſerve you. I ſhould mortify the pride of Mrs. Bromley, by placing a valuable, but helpleſs, young lady upon a level with her at once.

Sir HARRY. (*burſts into a laugh*)

This is to end in ſome joke.

DASHWOULD.

Wait for the wit before you laugh. I am in ſerious earneſt. Her underſtanding is the beſt among them. The others are all artificial; ſhe is a natural character; and if I am not miſtaken, has a heart. If I wanted heirs to my eſtate, ſhe ſhould be the mother of my children.

Sir HARRY.

Were I to be the dupe of all this, how you would laugh at me? Ha! ha! ha! I know you too well.

DASHWOULD.

Again! laughing without the provocation of a

joke Don't be the dupe of your own cunning. I know you love her; and will it not be a generoſity worthy of you, to extricate merit out of diſtreſs? Nay, the merit which you admire? The merit which would do honour to the choice of any man in England?

Sir HARRY.

Well, I cannot contain. (*laughs heartily*)

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter?

Sir HARRY.

The ſcrape in which you involved Millamour with the widow!

DASHWOULD.

Fooliſh! that was Malvil's doing. You'll hear more of it by and by. There is an underplot in all his actions. I adviſe you for the beſt. Here is a lady in queſtion, untainted by the faſhions of the age. Make her your own. She has no fortune; what then? Shew yourſelf ſuperior to the ſordid views, that govern the little mercenary ſpirits of the world.

Sir HARRY. (*laughs*)

I have juſt recollected what you ſaid of Jack Invoice, upon his marriage.

DASHWOULD.

Jack Invoice? He never was intended for any thing but to be laughed at. Upon the death of a rich uncle in the city, he comes to the Weſt-end of the town,

town, with a plumb in his pocket, and not an idea in his head; marries a fantaſtical woman of rank, and with a ſovereign contempt of all his former acquaintance, mixes with Lords and people of quality, who win his money, and throw his wig in the fire to divert themſelves. He laughs at their wit, and thinks himſelf in good company.

Sir HARRY.

Admirable! you have him to a hair. (*laughing heartily*)

DASHWOULD. (*laughing*)

Hey! the picture is like.—(*laughs*) Pretty well, is not it?

Sir HARRY.

Oh! ho! ho! the very thing! poor Jack Invoice! you have hunted him down.

DASHWOULD.

Have I? (*laughs*) Yes, I think I have been pleaſant upon him. But come; to our point: in marrying Miſs Neville, there is nothing ridiculous. You like her, that's clear.

Sir HARRY.

But ſhe does not like me, and that's as clear. Some body has done me a prejudice there. She received this letter, and gave it me to read.

DASHWOULD. (*reads*)

" To Miſs Neville—(*opens it*) Without a name?

Sir HARRY.

A poiſon'd arrow in the dark.

DASHWOULD. (*reads*)

" Anonymous letters are generally the effect of " clandeſtine malice; this comes from a friend. If " your honour, your virtue, and your peace of mind, " are worth your care, avoid the acquaintance of " Sir Harry. He is the deceiver of innocence, and " means to add your name to the liſt of thoſe whom " his treachery has already ruined. Make uſe of " this hint, and act accordingly."

A pretty epiſtle—(*pauſes*) Don't I know this hand?—So, ſo! I underſtand it: I can trace this: ſay no more, Sir Harry: purſue Miſs Neville the cloſer for this. Will you let ſuch a fellow as Malvil, rob you of a treaſure?

Sir HARRY.

You don't ſuſpect him?

DASHWOULD.

Leave it all to me. Aſſure Miſs Neville that this ſhall be cleared up. Huſh! we are interrupted: go and join the company.

Enter MALVIL.

Sir HARRY.

Pſhaw! pox! the company without you——

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

Very well; leave me now: (*Exit* Sir HARRY.) What's the matter Malvil?

MALVIL.

It will be over preſently: a ſudden ſenſation; I can't bear to ſee others made unhappy. Mrs. Bromley is a very valuable woman, but at times rather violent.

DASHWOULD.

And that's much to be lamented, is not it?

MALVIL.

You may laugh at it, Sir, but I think it a ſerious matter. I left poor Miſs Neville in a flood of tears; and——here ſhe comes.

Enter Miſs NEVILLE.

DASHWOULD.

Not riſing from table ſo ſoon?

Miſs NEVILLE.

Excuſe me, Sir, I had rather not ſtay.

DASHWOULD.

Never mind Mrs. Bromley's humours; come, we will all take your part.

Miſs NEVILLE.

I am not fit for company, Sir.

DASHWOULD.

I am ſorry to loſe you: I'll leave you with my worthy friend; he will adminſter conſolation.

[*Exit.*

Miſs NEVILLE.

Was there ever ſuch inhuman tyranny? Inſulted before the whole company!

MALVIL.

It hurts me to the quick. I could not have believed her capable of ſuch violence.

Miſs NEVILLE.

You ſaw that I gave her no provocation.

MALVIL.

It pains me to ſee what I do.

Miſs NEVILLE.

She breaks out in ſuch paſſionate onſets, and never conſiders that an overbearing pride is the worſt of cruelty to an ingenuous mind.

MALVIL.

There are few who know how to confer an obligation. A diſintereſted action gives ſuch moments of inward pleaſure! Oh! there are moments of the heart, worth all the giddy pleaſures of life. One benevolent action pays ſo amply, and yields ſuch exquiſite intereſt, that I wonder people are not fond of laying out their money in that way.

Miſs

Miſs NEVILLE.

During the whole time of dinner, it was one continued invective againſt me.

MALVIL.

Millamour's behaviour had diſconcerted her. But that is no excuſe. Goodneſs by fits, and generoſity out of mere whim, can never conſtitute a valuable character. I am ſorry to ſee you ſo afflicted.

Miſs NEVILLE.

You are very good, Sir.

MALVIL.

No, I have no merit in it; the inſtincts of my nature leave me no choice. I have ſtudied myſelf, and I find I am only good by inſtinct. I am ſtrangely intereſted for you. I have thought much of your ſituation: our time is ſhort; they will be all riſing from table, preſently. Attend to what I ſay: ſince Mrs. Bromley is ſo inceſſant in her tyranny, do as I already hinted to you. Withdraw from this houſe at once. Madam La Rouge has an apartment ready for you. You may there remain concealed. In the mean time I ſhall be at work for you. I ſhall prevail upon Mrs. Bromley to keep her word, about the five thouſand pounds. That added to what is in my power, will make a handſome ſettlement for you.

Miſs NEVILLE.

You heard what ſhe ſaid to Sir Harry.

MAL-

MALVIL.

She wants to drive you to ſome act of deſpair; perhaps to give you up a ſacrifice to Sir Harry's looſe deſires.

MISS NEVILLE.

Are you ſo clear about Sir Harry?

MALVIL. (*aſide*)

'Sdeath! I ſee ſhe loves him.——Hereafter, I will open a ſcene to aſtoniſh you. (*pauſes, and looks at her*) You can never be happy under this roof. Mrs. Bromley will make this quarrel up, I know ſhe will. The whole of her virtue conſiſts in repentance, but what kind of repentance? A ſpecious promiſe to reform her conduct, and a certain return of the ſame vices.

MISS NEVILLE.

She has made me deſperate. I can ſtay here no longer. I'll go back to the country. I ſhall there be at peace.

MALVIL.

You will be there too much out of the way. When you are ſettled at Madam La Rouge's, the haughty Mrs. Bromley will ſee to what ſhe has driven you, and for the ſake of her character, will begin to relent. Sir Harry muſt not know where you are. He means your ruin, I am ſorry to ſay it, but I can give you ſuch convincing proof——

Enter

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Do you go to your room, madam; let me ſee you no more to-day.

MALVIL.

It was a mere unguarded word that fell from Miſs Neville. (*ſpeaks to Mrs. Bromley aſide*) Millamour is aſhamed of his conduct. He is under my influence ſtill: I ſhall mould him to your wiſhes.

Mrs. BROMLEY. (*aſide to him*)

I am a fool to think any more about him. Go to him; watch him all day; you will not find me ungrateful. (*loud*) And pray tell thoſe girls to come up ſtairs. (*Exit Malvil*) Mighty well, madam. (*to Miſs Neville*) You muſt ſit next to Sir Harry: you have pretenſions, have you? And you muſt vouch for Lady Bell too? She does not love gaming; that ſtory is all calumny: beſpeak yourſelf a place in the ſtage coach; you ſhall quit this houſe, I promiſe you.

Miſs NEVILLE.

It will be the laſt time I ſhall receive thoſe orders, madam. Your favours are ſo embittered; there is ſuch a leaven of pride, even in your acts of bounty, that I cannot wiſh to be under any further obligations. If doing juſtice to Lady Bell, if avowing my ſentiments in the cauſe of ſo amiable a friend, can give you umbrage, I am not fit to remain in this houſe. [*Exit.*

Mrs.

Mrs. Bromley.

O brave! you ſhall travel. Give her a fortune! No, let Lady Bell reward her. How!——Millamour, as I live.

Enter Millamour.

Millamour.

Deliver me, fate! ſhe here:——Madam—I—I—I—you are not going to leave us, I hope.

Enter Sir John.

Mrs. Bromley. *(ſmiling at Millamour)*
And how can you look me in the face?

Millamour. *(ſeeing* Sir John*)*
I am glad you are come, Sir, I wanted to——

Mrs. Bromley.

Perverſe! what brings Sir John! *(aſide)*——I ſhall expect you above ſtairs, gentlemen. I muſt try once more to fix that irreſolute, inconſtant man. [*Exit.*

Sir John.

What a day's work have you made here?

Millamour.

Sir!

Sir John.

Can you expect any good from all this? For ever

ever doing and undoing! Theſe proceedings are terrible to your father.

MILLAMOUR.

You know, Sir, that to gratify you is the height of my ambition.

Sir JOHN.

For ſhame! don't imagine that you can deceive me any longer. Are you to be for ever in ſuſpence? Always reſolving, and yet never decided? Never knowing your own mind for five minutes?

MILLAMOUR.

I have not been haſty to determine.

Sir JOHN.

My indulgence has made me too ridiculous. You will force me to tell you my mind in harſher terms than I ever thought I ſhould have occaſion to do.

MILLAMOUR.

What has happened to day, was but a mere frolic, and it has all paſſed off in a little raillery.

Sir JOHN.

And do you think that ſufficient? While you remain inſenſible of your folly; transferring your inclinations from one object to another; hurried away by every caſualty, you will prove the jeſt of all your acquaintance. You will ceaſe to live, before you have begun.

MILLAMOUR.

This is rather too much, Sir. If I have, in a few in-

inſtances, departed from a reſolution that ſeemed fixed, you know very well, it is not uncommon; and when a perſon means an extraordinary leap, he retires back, to take advantage of the ground, and ſpring forward with greater vigour.

Sir JOHN.

And thus you amuſe yourſelf, compounding upon eaſy terms, for the folly of every hour. There is no relying upon you.

MILLAMOUR.

After all, Sir, it is the prudent part to conſider every thing. The ladies were rather haſty in their concluſion. In our moments of reflection, as objects paſs before us, opinion will wear different colours.

Sir JOHN.

The very Cameleon has that merit: but is there to be nothing inward? No ſelf-governing principle? A ſhip without a pilot, without rudder, or compaſs, is as likely to avoid rocks, and quickſands, as you to ſteer clear of ruin.

MILLAMOUR.

You ſeem exaſperated, but I really don't ſee the cauſe.

Sir JOHN.

No?—Can't you feel how abſurd it is to be always beginning the world? For ever in a doubt? Day after day embarking in new projects, nay twenty different projects in one day, and often in an hour?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Spare my confuſion: I feel my folly; I feel it all; and let my future conduct——

Sir JOHN.

George, can I take your word? I know you have been at the gaming-table.

MILLAMOUR.

The gaming-table!

Sir JOHN.

Say no more: I know it all: after the indulgence I have ſhewn you, I now ſee that my hopes are all to be diſappointed. If you have a mind to attone for what is paſt, purſue one certain plan, and be ſomebody. The time now opens a new ſcene, and calls for other manners. Reform your conduct, and I ſhall be happy. But I am tired of this eternal levity: my patience is wore out. I ſhall ſtay no longer in this houſe to be a witneſs of your abſurdity.

[*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

I have made myſelf very ridiculous here. I can't ſhew my face any more in this family. I'll go back to the Temple, and not marry theſe ten years. The law leads to great things: a ſeat in Parliament, a vote or two againſt your conſcience, a ſilk gown, and a judge; that's the courſe of things. I'll purſue my ambition.—Honeſt friend, *(calls to a ſervant)* hiſt! honeſt friend, will you be ſo good as juſt to get my hat?

Enter

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

No, I bar hats. What going to desert us? The sport is but just beginning. Bygrove has been lecturing his son, and quarrelling with Malvil. The integrity of that honest gentleman is suspected at last. He was the worthiest man in the world this morning, as good a creature as ever was born, but now he has sold himself to the widow. Lady Bell has been lively upon the occasion; and Malvil, to support his spirits, has plyed the Burgundy, till he looks the very picture of hypocrisy, with a ruddy complexion, and a sparkling eye.

MILLAMOUR.

You may divert yourself, Sir; I have done with them all.

DASHWOULD.

But I can't part with you: you shall join us; Malvil shall have no quarter: he will stick to his glass till his charity for his neighbour begins to stagger; then off drops the mask: he will have courage enough to rail at mankind, and his true character will come forth, like letters in lemon juice before the fire.

MILLAMOUR.

Po! absurd! I am on the rack. Why did you force me to stay dinner? I have been so weak, so frivolous.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

How ſo? Becauſe you chang'd your mind? There is nothing more natural. Don't you ſee men doing the ſame thing every day? Down goes the old manſion; a new one riſes; exotic trees ſmile on the landſcape, and enjoy the northen air; and when the whole is finiſhed, in leſs than a twelve-month, the auctioneer mounts his pulpit. "Pleaſing contiguity"—"Beautiful, and pictureſque ſcene"—"Delectably featured by Nature"—"Shall I ſay twenty thouſand?"—Down it goes to the higheſt bidder, who pays his money, and runs away the next morning with an opera ſinger to Italy.

MILLAMOUR. (*laughing*)

Why, yes, we ſee theſe things every day.

DASHWOULD.

No doubt; men are fickle, and inconſtant.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true; it is the way through life; in the loweſt rank, as well as the higheſt. You ſhan't ſee a journeyman Weaver, but he has his diſguſt, like a Lord, and changes his lodging, his houſe of call, his barber, and his field preacher.

DASHWOULD.

Certainly; and then there is a real charm in variety. Beſides what you did to day, was a mere frolic.

MILLAMOUR.

Nothing more: and that fellow, Malvil, was the occaſion of it. My heart never rightly warmed to that man. I ſhall never conſult him again. Affairs were in a right train, if he had not interpoſed.

DASHWOULD.

You ſhall have your revenge. I have a mine to ſpring will blow him up.—(*laughs*) His advice to-day has ſerved to produce the widow's character.

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, it has given a diſplay of her. (*laughs*) How could ſhe think me in earneſt? Marry her! I would go into the army ſooner.

DASHWOULD.

A good pretty trade, the army: if you are killed in battle, it is your affair; if you conquer, you may retire, and live very prettily upon half pay.

MILLAMOUR.

Very true: the law is a more certain road.

DASHWOULD.

A good agreeable life the law is: for ever entangled in the cobwebs of Weſtminſter-hall; and you help to ſpin them yourſelf into the bargin.

MILLAMOUR.

And at the end of twenty years, you are thought a good promiſing young man.

DASH-

DASHWOULD.

In the mean time you are conſtantly hiring out your lungs, and ever in a paſſion about other people's affairs.

MILLAMOUR.

And travelling circuits, in hopes of finding each county diſtracted; with a barbarous, bloody murder, in every jail, and ſo live upon the calamities of mankind.

DASHWOULD.

Like phyſicians, when a north-eaſt wind, a Lord Mayor's feaſt, or a jail diſtemper, has made a good ſickly time of it. (*both laugh*)

Enter Lady BELL, *and* Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Come, ſiſter, leave the men to themſelves. Mr. Daſhwould, has their wit frightened you away?

MILLAMOUR. (*looking at her*)

" Look in her face, and you forget them all."

DASHWOULD.

Won't your Ladyſhip have compaſſion on that gentleman?

Lady BELL.

Compaſſion!——my ſiſter and I, we hope for his protection?

Enter Capt. BYGROVE.

Capt. BYGROVE.

When you go away from company, Lady Bell, you draw every body in your train.

Lady BELL.

Oh! you have ſo overpowered me with civil, and tender things!

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide*)

What does he follow her for?

Lady BELL.

A l'honneur, gentlemen. (*goes up to Millamour*) Uncle! Uncle Millamour, when you are married to my aunt, I hope you will be kind to us both.

(*curtſies*)

MILLAMOUR. (*turning away*)

Confuſion! daggers! daggers!

Lady JANE. (*curtſying*)

May I ſalute you, uncle?

MILLAMOUR.

Po! this foolery! (*walks away*)

Lady BELL.

Let us give him all his titles!—Brother—when you marry my Siſter.—(*makes a low curtſy*)

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

How can you, Lady Bell?

Lady JANE.

Uncle!—Brother! (both laugh)

Lady BELL.

And Brother Uncle!

MILLAMOUR. (*breaking away from them*)

This is too much—No patience can endure it. (*turns to Lady Bell*) Madam, this uſage——

(Lady BELL *and* Lady JANE *both laugh loud.*)

Lady JANE.

Come, ſiſter, let us leave him. [*Exit.*

Lady BELL.

Oh! ho! ho! I ſhall expire. (*going*)

MILLAMOUR.

Why will you torment me thus? (*takes her by the hand*) Am I to be for ever made your ſport?

Lady BELL.

Oh! you would not have me laugh. To be ſure, when one conſiders, it is a ſerious matter. And though Captain Bygrove (*pointing to him*) has orders to be in love with me; and though he has declared himſelf in the warmeſt terms——

MILLAMOUR.

And could you liſten to him?

Lady BELL.

And yet, after all your promiſes, when you had touched my heart—(*in a ſoftened tone*)

MILAMOUR.

Jealous of me by this light. (*aſide*)

Lady BELL.

After all your faithleſs vows, to break them as you have done, like a Turk, or a Jew, or a Mahometan, (*crying*) and leave me, like Dido and Æneas, it is enough to break a young girl's heart. (*crying bitterly*) ſo it is, it is——There, will that pleaſe you? (*burſts into a laugh*) Adieu, uncle! my compliments to my aunt—— [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

Damnation!

Enter Sir HARRY.

Sir HARRY.

Did not I hear ſomebody crying?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, and laughing too. Captain Bygrove, you ſaid ſomething to Lady Bell, what was it, Sir?

Capt. BYGROVE.

What I deſire the world to know; I love her, I adore

adore her. My father has orderd it, Mrs. Bromley approves; Lady Bell encourages me; and I ſhall be the happieſt of mankind.

MILLAMOUR.

You and I muſt talk apart, Sir. You know my prior claim. Attempt my life rather than my love. You muſt think no more of her, Sir; ſhe is mine by every tie, and ſo I ſhall tell her, this moment. [*Exit.*

DASAWOULD.

Now hold that reſolution, if you can.

Capt. BYGROVE.

I have managed it well.

DASHWOULD

Admirably!

SIR HARRY.

What does all this mean? Daſhwould, you are wanted in the next room. Malvil is in for it: he ſits toaſting Miſs Neville, while every idea fades away from his countenance, all going out one by one, and his eye ſinks into the dim vacuity of a briſk no meaning at all.

DASHWOULD.

I'll look in upon 'em.—Bygrove, I ſee Miſs Neville: let us give Sir Harry his opportunity.

Enter Miſs Neville.

Miſs Neville.

I thought Lady Bell was here: I beg your pardon, gentlemen.

Dashwould.

Your company is always agreeable, is not it, Sir Harry? The gentleman will ſpeak for himſelf. Come, Bygrove, I have occaſion for you.

[*Exit with Captain Bygrove.*

Sir Harry.

May I now preſume, madam——

Miſs Neville.

You chuſe your time but ill, Sir Harry. I have ſo many things to diſtract me, I cannot liſten to you now.

Sir Harry. (*takes her hand*)

But you promiſed to hear me; I have long beheld your ſufferings.

Miſs Neville.

They do not warrant improper liberties. I can be humble as becomes my ſituation. I hope you will not oblige me to ſhew that ſpirit, which virtue is as much intitled to, as the proudeſt fortune in the kingdom.

Sir Harry.

I mean you no diſreſpect. That letter is a black artifice

artifice to traduce my character: the fraud ſhall be brought to light; you may rely upon it; nor will you be ſo ungenerous as to believe the dark aſſaſſin of my honour.

Miſs Neville.

I know not what foundation there is for it, nor is it for me to charge you with any thing. I have no right to take that liberty.

Sir Harry.

Why harbour ſuſpicions unworthy of you? In me, you behold a warm admirer, who aſpires at the poſſeſſion of what he loves, and trembles for the event.

Miſs Neville.

I muſt take the liberty to doubt your ſincerity. I know my own deficiencies, and I beg leave to withdraw.

Sir Harry.

By all that's amiable in your mind and perſon, my views are honourable as ever yet inſpired a lover's heart.

Miſs Neville.

I would fain expreſs my gratitude. (*weeps*)

Sir Harry.

Why thoſe tears?

Miſs Neville.

Your character, I dare ſay, Sir, will come out clear

clear and unſullied. You will permit me to take care of mine. It is all I have to value. I ſhall not continue any longer in this houſe. Mrs. Bromley has made it impoſſible; I wiſh you all happineſs, Sir.

Sir HARRY.

That reſolution I approve of: let me provide you a retreat, and in a few days—

Miſs NEVILLE.

I muſt beg to be excuſed: that I can never think of.

Sir HARRY.

By Heaven, I mean to raiſe you to that independance, which your merit deſerves. I would place you in that ſplendor, which Mrs. Bromley may envy.

Miſs NEVILLE.

I can only return my thanks. Lady Bell will know where I am. I feel no ambition: I do not want to give pain to Mrs. Bromley: I ſeek humble content, and aſk no more.

Sir HARRY.

You do injuſtice to yourſelf and to me:—Hey! all breaking up from table!

Miſs NEVILLE.

You muſt not detain me now, Sir Harry. I humbly take my leave. [*Exit.*

Sir HARRY.

I wonder what Daſhwould will ſay to all this. I ſhall

ſhall like to hear him: he will turn it to a joke, I warrant him. No end of his pleaſantry.

Enter MALVIL *in liquor*, BYGROVE, *and* DASHWOULD.

MALVIL.

Very well; make the moſt of it. Since you force me to ſpeak, I ſay her character is a vile one.

BYGROVE.

Here is a fellow whom wine only inſpires with malice.

DASHWOULD.

Po! malice! Malvil has no harm in him.

MALVIL.

You may talk of Mrs. Bromley, but ſhe is as vile a character, as pride, and inſolence, and avarice, and vanity, and faſhionable airs, and decayed beauty can jumble together.

BYGROVE.

Here's a return for her hoſpitality!

MALVIL.

Marry her, I ſay; marry her, and try.

BYGROVE.

You ſhall not have a ſhilling with Miſs Neville.

MALVIL.

There, the ſecret's out: you want to marry her, and make her break her word. Mankind's a villain! a medley

a medley of falſe friends, eloping wives, ſtock jobbers, and uſurers. Wits that won't write, and fools that will. *(ſings)*

BYGROVE.

Daſhwould, you are a panegyriſt, compared to this man.

Sir HARRY.

Yes, he takes your trade out of your hands.

MALVIL.

She is Mrs. Bromley, the widow, and you are Mr. Bygrove, the widower; and ſo, bite the biter, that's all.

BYGROVE.

His wit ſoars above you, Mr. Daſhwould.

MALVIL.

Wit is a bad trade. Letters have no friend left in theſe degenerate times. Shew a man of letters to the firſt of your nobility, and they will leave him to ſtarve in a garret. Introduce a fellow, who can ſing a catch, write a dull political pamphlet, or remarks upon a Dutch memorial, or play off fireworks, and he ſhall paſs ſix months in the country, by invitation. Mæcenas died two thouſand years ago, and you are not hiſtorian enough to know it.

Sir HARRY.

Daſhwould, he makes a bankrupt of you.

BY-

BYGROVE.

I have found him out: I know him now: a pretended friend, that he may more ſurely betray you. Go, and get ſome coffee, to ſettle your head.

[*Exit.*

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley will ſettle your head.

DASHWOULD.

Let us take him up ſtairs; he'll tumble over the tea-table, to ſhew his politeneſs.

Sir HARRY. (*taking him by the arm*)

Come, the ladies wait for us.

MALVIL.

Mankind, I ſay, is a villain! (*ſings*)

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL.

Bleſs me, Mr. Malvil!

MALVIL.

All Daſhwould's doing to expoſe a body. Do you look to Millamour, that's what I ſay to you.

DASHWOULD.

He ſhan't ſtay to plague your Ladyſhip.—Come, Malvil, let us go and be tender of reputation above ſtairs.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I'm always tender, and you are ſcurrilous.
(*Sings, and Exit, led by Daſhwould and Sir Harry*)

Lady BELL.

How Millamour follows me up and down! Charming! here he comes.

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell, allow me but one ſerious moment.

Lady BELL.

This bracelet is always coming off.
(*fiddles with it*)

MILLAMOUR.

Whatever appearances may have been, I burn with as true a paſſion, as ever penetrated a faithful heart.

Lady BELL. (*aſide, and ſmiling*)

I know he is mine.—This ſilly, obſtinate bauble! What were you ſaying? Oh! making love again.

MILLAMOUR.

By this dear hand I ſwear——

Lady BELL.

Hold, hold, no violence. Give me my liberty, and thus I make uſe of it. (*runs away from him*)

Enter

Enter Capt. BYGROVE.

Lady BELL. (*meeting him*)

Oh! I have been wiſhing for you. How could you ſtay ſo long?

Capt. BYGROVE.

They detained me againſt my will. But you ſee, I am true to my appointment.

MILLAMOUR. (*aſide to Bygrove*)

Are you ſo? You ſhall keep an appointment with me.

Lady BELL.

I was ſurrounded with darts, and flames. That gentleman was for renewing the old ſtory, but it is ſo ridiculous!

(*walks up the ſtage with Captain Bygrove*)

MILLAMOUR.

Diſtraction! to be inſulted thus!

Lady BELL. (*as ſhe walks up*)

You have prevailed upon me to be in earneſt at laſt. Since your father has propoſed it, and ſince you have declared yourſelf, why, if I muſt ſpeak, get my aunt's conſent, and mine follows of courſe.

MILLAMOUR. (*liſtening*)

If ever I forgive this.

Capt.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Mrs. Bromley has conſented. (*then aſide to Lady Bell*) He has it; this will gall his pride.

MILLAMOUR.

No end of her folly. I was bent on marriage, but now it's all her own fault. And yet ſhe knows my heart is fixed upon her.

Lady BELL.

(*walking down with Capt. Bygrove*)

You are ſo obliging, and I have ſo many things to ſay to you; but if people will not perceive, when they interrupt private converſation.

MILLAMOUR.

If ever I enter theſe doors again, may the ſcorn of the whole ſex purſue me. [*Exit.*

Capt. BYGROVE.

We have carried this too far.

Lady BELL.

The barbarous man, when he ſhould have taken no denial, but have lain on the ground, imploring, beſeeching—Delightful! here he comes again.

(*goes to Capt. Bygrove*)

Enter MILLAMOUR.

MILLAMOUR. (*walking up to Lady Bell*)

Is it not ſtrange, that you can't know your own mind for two minutes together?

Lady

Lady BELL.

Ho! ho! the assurance of that reproach!

(walks away)

MILLAMOUR. *(to Bygrove)*

Appoint your time and place: I must have satisfaction for this.

Capt. BYGROVE.

To-morrow morning, when the marriage ceremony is over.

MILLAMOUR.

I shall expect you, Sir. *(going)*

Enter Lady JANE.

MILLAMOUR.

This is lucky. I was in quest of your Ladyship.

Lady JANE.

In quest of me, Sir?

MILLAMOUR.

In quest of you, Ma'am. I have been waiting for an opportunity, and, if the sincerest sorrow can expiate past offences—Here's a chair, Ma'am.

(hands a chair)

Capt. BYGROVE. *(to Lady Bell)*

We may drive him to extremities with Lady Jane: I'll leave you to recover your wanderer. *[Exit.*

MILLAMOUR. (*ſitting down*)

If you will permit me to aſſure you—

Lady JANE.

But while my ſiſter is my rival——

MILLAMOUR.

Your ſiſter's charms carry their own antidote with them. If there is faith in man, I mean to atone for what is paſt.

Lady BELL. (*coming forward*)

So, ſo; with what pleaſure ſhe hears him? Did you ſpeak to me, Mr. Millamour?

MILLAMOUR.

There was a time, Ma'am!—(*turns to Lady Jane*) Now ſhe wants to interrupt us: don't let us mind her, and ſhe'll withdraw.

Lady BELL.

Wear the willow, Lady Bell?—Not a word, Sir? You are in the right: my ſpirits are too violent for you; and though what I ſay is not abſolutely wit—Do you like wit? I am ſure you ought; for it is undefineable, like yourſelf.

MILLAMOUR. (*ſmiling*)

That is not ill ſaid.

Lady BELL. (*ſits at a diſtance*)

Horrid! I ſhall be vapour'd up to my eyes. I'll try

try my ſong, to baniſh melancholy. Where is that fooliſh guittar? *(goes for it)*

MILLAMOUR.

Now her jealouſy is at work. I knew ſhe would be mortified. Let us agree to pique her pride, and probe her to the quick.

Lady BELL.

Though I can't ſing, it diverts a body to try.
(ſits down, and ſings)

Sabrina, with that ſober mien,
The converſe ſweet, the look ſerene;
Thoſe eyes that beam the gentleſt ray,
And though ſhe loves, that ſweet delay;
Unconſcious, ſeems each heart to take,
And conquers for her ſubject's ſake!

MILLAMOUR.

Vaſtly well! *(liſtens, ſmiles, looks at her, draws his chair near her, and beats time on her knee)*

Lady BELL. *(ſings)*

The tyrant Cynthia wings the dart,
Coquetting with a bleeding heart;
Has cruelty, which all adore,
Flights that torment, yet pleaſe the more:
Her lover ſtrives to break his chain,
But can't, ſuch pleaſure's in the pain.

MILLAMOUR.

Oh! charming! charming! *(kiſſes her hand)*

Lady Bell.

What are you about, you wretch? Only look, ſiſter: I ſuppoſe, Sir, when you have done, you will give me my hand again.

Lady Jane.

I promiſe you, ſiſter, your triumph will be ſhort. [*Exit.*

Lady Bell.

How ſhe flung out of the room! (*riſes, and walks about*)

Millamour.

You know, Lady Bell, that I am your's by conqueſt. I adore you ſtill, and burn with a lover's faithful fires.

Lady Bell.

Come, and have a diſh of tea to cool you.

Millamour.

Hear me but a moment. It is now time you ſhould be tired of this eternal diſplay of your power. Your power is ſufficiently acknowledged and felt by all. You may triumph over adoring crouds, but one lover treated with generoſity, will be more to your honour and your happineſs.

Lady Bell.

Pretty, very pretty! I have read all that in one of the poets. (*repeats*)

By

By our diſtreſs, you nothing gain,
Unleſs you love, you pleaſe in vain.

Come up ſtairs, and I'll ſhew you the whole poem.

And one adorer kindly us'd,
Gives more delight than crowds refus'd.

Will you come? (*beckons him*) Won't you? Well, conſider of it, and when you know your own mind, you may change it again. [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

There now! Every thing by turns, and nothing long. Fickle do they call me? A man muſt be fickle, who purſues her through all the whimſies of her temper. Admire her in one ſhape, and ſhe takes another in a moment.

One charm diſplay'd, another ſtrikes our view,
In quick variety for ever new.

End of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT the FIFTH.

Enter MILLAMOUR, *and* DASHWOULD.

MILLAMOUR.

AM I to be ſacrificed to your humour?

DASHWOULD.

Am I to be ſacrificed to your abſurdity?

MILLAMOUR.

When pleaſantry is out of all time and place——

DASHWOULD.

Why then I ſhall be tired of all time and place.

MILLAMOUR.

Look ye, Mr. Daſhwould, it is time to be ſerious. The wit, that wounds the breaſt of a friend, is the peſt of ſociety.

DASHWOULD.

The paſſion, Mr. Millamour, that runs headlong without cauſe, and will not hearken to reaſon, is a greater peſt of ſociety, than all the little wit that has been in the world. What does all this mean, Sir? what is it about?

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

If I loſt money at play, was it for you to carry the tale to my father? for you to ſubject me to his reproaches?

DASHWOULD.

I don't know by what fatality it happens, but that generally comes laſt, which ought to be mentioned firſt. I repeated nothing to Sir John—Who did? Do you aſk that queſtion? Malvil, Sir, with his uſual duplicity.

MILLAMOUR.

Malvil? He has this moment told me how pleaſant you were upon the ſubject, and at my expence.

DASHWOULD.

Yes; when he had revealed the whole, and with falſe tenderneſs lamented your folly.

MILLAMOUR.

'Sdeath! I underſtand it now. I have been abſurd here.

DASHWOULD.

I don't diſlike you for your abſurdity: that ſerves to divert one: Malvil excites other feelings. You know the character he gave you of Lady Bell?

MILLAMOUR.

Yes, and all ſlander.

DASHWOULD.

I left him but now, repreſenting you to Lady Bell in the ſame colours——And here——(*ſhews a letter*) Here I have him faſt. An anonymous letter againſt Sir Harry, ſent for his own purpoſes, to Miſs Neville. All his contrivance, dictated by himſelf, and written at an attorney's deſk: You know old Copyhold?

MILLAMOUR.

Did he pen the letter?

DASHWOULD.

One of his clerks was the ſcribe. The young man is now in the houſe, at my requeſt, and ready to prove Malvil the author. Here he comes—things are not ripe as yet. Say nothing now.

Enter MALVIL.

MILLAMOUR.

Walk in; you come opportunely.

MALVIL.

If I can be of any ſervice——

MILLAMOUR.

To be of diſſervice, is your province; and when you have done the miſchief, you can transfer the blame to others.

MAL-

MALVIL.

I have been rather off my guard to day. I am not uſed to be overtaken in that manner; my head is not quite clear.

MILLAMOUR.

Then this buſineſs may ſober you. What was your whiſper to me about that gentleman?

MALVIL.

That he treated with wanton pleaſantry what I thought a ſerious matter. I may miſtake the means, but the end of my actions I can always anſwer for. Sir John might hear of the affair from another quarter, and ſo to ſoften his reſentment——

MILLAMOUR.

You took care to excite it.

MALVIL.

I—I—I am apt to carry my heart at my tongue's end.

DASHWOULD.

I knew his heart was not in the right place.

MALVIL.

I did not addreſs myſelf to you, Sir.

MILLAMOUR.

I know you have the grimace of character, Mr. Malvil, arm'd at all points with plauſible maxims. But

But which of your maxims can juſtify the treachery of betraying the ſecret of a friend? Who does it, is a deſtroyer of all confidence; and when he attempts to varniſh his conduct, with the ſpecious name of friendſhip, the malignity ſtrikes the deeper: artful, ſmiling malignity.

MALVIL.

I deſerve all this. Friendſhip in exceſs is a fault. There are bounds and limits even to virtue. It would be well if a man could always hit the exact point. There is however ſomething voluptuous in meaning well.

DASHWOULD.

Well expreſs'd, Malvil! ha! ha! you are right.

MILLAMOUR.

No more of your muſty ſentences.

MALVIL.

Morals are not capable of mathematical demonſtration. And——now I recollect myſelf—It did not occur at firſt—It was Madam La Rouge told the affair to Sir John—This gentleman here—I ſuppoſe you will take his word—he ſays ſhe hears every thing, tells every thing, and he calls her a walking newspaper: not that ſhe means any harm—I only mean to ſay——

DASHWOULD.

Oh! fie, don't be too ſevere upon her.

MAL-

MALVIL.

She ſaid at the ſame time——you know her manner——ſhe told Sir John that you are in love with half a dozen, and will deceive them all, and Lady Bell into the bargain.

MILLAMOUR.

Diſtraction! ſhe dare not ſay it. This is another of your ſubterfuges——You know, Sir, how you traduced Lady Bell, and made that gentleman the author of your own malevolence. At any other time and place, this ſword ſhould read you a lecture of morality.

MALVIL.

You are too warm: and ſince I ſee it is ſo, to avoid contention, I ſhall adjourn the debate. [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

Deceive Lady Bell!—Whoever has dared to ſay it,—Madam La Rouge lives but a little way off. I'll bring her this moment, to confront this arch impoſtor. (*going*)

DASHWOULD.

You'll be ſure to return.

MILLAMOUR.

This very night ſhall unmaſk him. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

I ſhall depend upon you. Malvil ſhall anſwer to Sir Harry: all his artifices ſhall be fairly laid open.

Enter

Enter BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

Mr. Dashwould, we are now good friends. I have repoſed a confidence in you. You know every thing between me and Mrs. Bromley, but you ſee how ſhe goes on.

DASHWOULD.

And I ſee how you go on. You are the dupe of your own policy.

BYGROVE.

How ſo?

DASHWOULD.

The Widow's ſchemes are ſeconded by your own imprudence. Can't you ſee, that if Millamour were once married out of your way, Mrs. Bromley would then be at her laſt ſtake, and you might have ſome chance? And yet your ſon has it in command to defeat my friend Millamour with Lady Bell.

BYGROVE.

How! light breaks in upon me. Gull that I was! my ſon ſhall marry Lady Jane directly.

DASHWOULD.

To be ſure; and the conſequence is, that Lady Bell declares for Millamour.

BYGROVE.

Right: I am for ever obliged to you: I'll go, and ſpeak

ſpeak to my ſon, this moment: Lady Jane ſhall be his, without delay. [*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

So much for my friend, the Captain; I have ſettled his buſineſs.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Mr. Daſhwould, I am ſo diſtracted——a terrible buſineſs has happened.

DASHWOULD.

What's the matter?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Miſs Neville, I can't think what is come of her—ſhe is not to be found, high or low. We have ſearched every where for her. What can be the meaning of this?

DASHWOULD.

Is Malvil gone?

Mrs. BROMLEY.

This very moment: he has no hand in it. He ſees, and pities my diſtreſs. He is gone to make enquiry. A girl that I was ſo fond of, and never ſaid an angry word to.

DASHWOULD.

You have been remarkably mild.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bromley.

You know how tender I have been of her.—What can have put this into her head? How long has Millamour been gone? ——I underſtand it now. This is his exploit.

Dashwould.

You wrong him—I will undertake to diſcover this plot for you.

Enter Bygrove.

Dashwould.

You can comfort the Lady, Sir; I ſhall return immediately. [*Exit.*

Bygrove.

May I take the liberty, Madam——

Mrs. Bromley.

Why torment me thus? You are all in a plot againſt me.

Enter Lady Bell, Lady Jane, *and* Capt. Bygrove.

Mrs. Bromley.

There, Lady Bell, there is your lover run away with your couſin.

Lady Bell.

I can depend upon her. I can ſtill venture to anſwer for her honour.

Bygrove.

She will come back, you need not alarm yourſelf.

Mrs.

Mrs. Bromley.

You have ſeduced her, for any thing I know. I am diſtracted by you all, and will hear no more.

[*Exit.*

Bygrove.

Mrs. Bromley, permit me to ſay a word.

[*Exit.*

Lady Bell.

I hope there is nothing amiſs. I can rely upon Miſs Neville's diſcretion; I think I can. Come, ſiſter, let us go and enquire. (*going, looks back*) Hey! you two are ſtaying, to ſay delicate things to each other.

Capt. Bygrove.

Our difficulties, you know, are at an end. I have my father's orders to follow my inclination. Had Millamour ſtaid, I have a plot would have fixed him your Ladyſhip's for ever.

Lady Jane.

And we ſha'n't ſee him again this month, perhaps.

Lady Bell.

Let him take his own way. I am only uneaſy about Miſs Neville at preſent.

Enter Dashwould. (*with a letter in his hand*)

Dashwould.

This way, you are wanted: I have a letter here, that diſcovers all.

[*Exit.*

Lady

Lady Bell.

But what does it ſay? Let us go and hear it directly. [*Exeunt.*

Scene, an Apartment at Madam La Rouge's.

Enter Millamour, *and* La Rouge.

Millamour.

Have you ſent to Daſhwould?

La Rouge.

Yes, I have ſent him letter.

Millamour.

Miſs Neville here you ſay?

La Rouge.

She come an hour ago, all in tear.

Millamour.

Then ſhe is ſafe.——You are ſure you never ſaid any thing to Sir John about the gaming buſineſs?

La Rouge.

Sur, mon honneur. What I tell? I know noting. And I not ſee Sir John in my houſe, it is two tree months.

Millamour.

You ſhall come, and confront Malvil, at Mrs. Bromley's.

La

La Rouge.

Bagatelle! what you go dere for?—Bo, dis is all put me off—pay your littel bill. Vat is money to you? I ſo poor, you ſo rich.

Millamour.

You did not ſay that I ſhould deceive Lady Bell?

La Rouge.

Monſieur Malvil, he tell you ſo?

Millamour.

Yes; and I tremble for the conſequence.

La Rouge.

It is one great villain—I great reſpect for you. Vous eſt aimable. Monſieur Malvil, he is great fripon. And I ver ſorry he be marry to Madamoiſelle Neville.

Millamour.

Married to her?

La Rouge.

You not know it?—He is marry to her dis day. He take my apartment tree week ago. He not have it known dat he is marry for five ſix day; write letter to me dis afternoon; he muſt be let in ver private; de ſervant not to ſee him; go up de back ſtairs to her room, and ſo l' affaire eſt faite.

MILLAMOUR.

And thus he has ſeduced her from her relations? Let me ſee the letter. (*reads aſide*)

LA ROUGE.

I not tink him ſo bad to talk of me, and tell ſuch parcel of ſtory, vid not one word of true.

MILLAMOUR.

So; here he is in black and white. To come privately, is he? If I could detain him here, and prevent all means of his eſcaping——

LA ROUGE.

Eſcape? Up back ſtairs, he muſt come thro' dat apartment; (*pointing to a door in the back ſcene*) I turn de key in de back door: voila votre priſonier; he is priſoner.

MILLAMOUR.

Exquiſite woman! I'll lock this door, and ſecure the key. (*locks the door in the back ſcene*) Huſh!
(*A rap at the ſtreet door*)

LA ROUGE.

Le voila: he come now.

MILLAMOUR.

Fly, let him in; ſend once more to Daſhwould; I want him this inſtant; fly, diſpatch.

LA

LA ROUGE.

I do all vat you bid me. [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

It is honeſt of her to make this diſcovery. If this be Malvil—a ſoft whiſper that—(*liſtens*) 'Tis he, I hear his voice——I ſhall have the merit of defeating villainy, and protecting innocence——Don't I hear Miſs Neville? (*goes to a room-door*) Miſs Neville!

NEVILLE. (*entering*)

Madam La Rouge!---Oh, Sir! what brings you hither?

MILLAMOUR.

It is your intereſt to hear me; your happineſs depends upon it.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Alas! I fear I have been too raſh.

MILLAMOUR.

Command your attention, and liſten to me: Malvil has planned your ruin.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Impoſſible: he has too much honour: why will you alarm me thus? I am unfortunate, and you, Sir, need not add to my afflictions.

MILLAMOUR.

You have truſted yourſelf to a villain: he means, at midnight, to gain acceſs to your perſon; to triumph over your honour, and then leave you to remorſe, to ſhame, and miſery. Read that letter. (*gives it her, and ſhe reads it to herſelf*) She's an amiable girl, and I dare ſay, will make an admirable wife—— Hark! I hear him in yonder room. Suppreſs each wild emotion of ſurprize, and wait the event.

MISS NEVILLE.

I can ſcarce believe what I read. What have I done? (*weeps*) You have led me into a maze of doubts and fears, and there I wander, diſtracted, loſt; without a clue to guide me.

MILLAMOUR.

I will direct you: rely upon me.

Enter DASHWOULD, Lady BELL, *and* Lady JANE.

DASHWOULD.

La Rouge has told us the whole ſtory.

MILLAMOUR.

Huſh! no noiſe.

Lady BELL.

My ſweet girl, how could you frighten me ſo?

Miſs

Miſs NEVILLE.

I bluſh for what I have done. But Mrs. Bromley's cruelty drove me to deſpair.

Lady JANE.

My dear, all will be well: don't flurry yourſelf.

Lady BELL.

Tho' my aunt vexed you, why run away from me?

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY, BYGROVE, Sir HARRY, *and* Capt. BYGROVE.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Where is this unhappy girl?

MILLAMOUR.

A moment's patience.

Enter LA ROUGE.

MILLAMOUR.

Is he ſafe?

LA ROUGE.

He is dere in the room as ſafe as in Baſtile.

MILLAMOUR.

Speak to him thro' the door: now all be ſilent.

LA ROUGE.

Monſieur Malvil, open de door.

MALVIL. (*within*)

Do you open it, you have the key.

LA ROUGE.

De key, it is dere: Miſs Neville, it is gone to bed; all de houſe aſleep: I in de dark; now is your time.

MILLAMOUR. (*to La Rouge*)

Huſh! here is the key. (*takes away the lights*)

MALVIL.

Will you diſpatch?

LA ROUGE.

Attendez: here is de key: I let you out. (*unlocks the door*)

MALVIL. (*entering*)

All in darkneſs: Is ſhe gone to bed?

LA ROUGE. (*leading him*)

She wait for you: vere was you marry?

MALVIL.

St. James's pariſh: Sir Harry has not ſucceeded: ſhe prefers me. Say nothing of it yet awhile.

LA ROUGE.

No; not a vord: tenez, I get light for you.

[*Exit.*

MAL-

MALVIL.

So; I have carried my point. The family will be glad to patch up the affair, to avoid the disgrace.

LA ROUGE. (*Entering*)

Ah! you look en cavalier; ver good apartment for you; and dere is good picture. It is Tarquin and Lucrece; Tarquin go to ravish de lady in de night. It was villain, was it not?

MALVIL.

A terrible fellow!

LA ROUGE.

And dis room it is velle furnish: look about you; more picture, and all original. (*turns him to the company*)

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha! your servant Mr. Malvil!

MALVIL.

Hell and confusion!

MILLAMOUR. (*taking him by the arm*)

There are bounds and limits even to virtue.

DASHWOULD. (*at his other arm*)

Morals are capable of mathematical demonstration.

Lady Bell. (*to Miſs Neville*)

Let us withdraw from all this buſtle. Sir Harry, ſtep this way, I want you. [*Exit with Miſs Neville, Lady Jane, and Sir Harry.*

Dashwould.

This is all according to the fitneſs of things.

Millamour.

Something voluptuous in meaning well.

Bygrove.

Daſhwould, your ridicule is now in ſeaſon to expoſe ſuch a character. He is fair game, and hunt him down as you pleaſe.

La Rouge.

Ah! Monſieur Tartuffe. [*Exit laughing.*

Malvil.

The fiends about me!—Mr. Bygrove, you are a thinking man, I appeal to you.

Millamour.

I appeal to this letter, Sir. (*reads*)

"Madam La Rouge."

" Miſs Neville has this day given me her hand in " marriage. I would not have it known for ſome " time. Conduct me to her apartment, unknown " to your ſervants. The way up the back ſtairs will " be beſt. Your ſecrecy ſhall be rewarded by"

" Martin Malvil."

Omnes,

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

MALVIL.

The letter is forged——let me see it. (*snatches at it*)

DASHWOULD.

And I have another proof! this anonymous scrowl, written by your direction, and sent to Miss Neville, to give a stab to the character of Sir Harry. Do you deny it, Sir? Your secretary is now in the house; I brought him with me; he is ready to prove you the author of this mean, clandestine mischief.

MALVIL.

All false; all a forgery. Where is this French impostor? Where is your witness, Sir? (*to Dashwould*) I'll put them both to the proof, this moment.

[*Exit.*

DASHWOULD.

No private parlying. [*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

No; we must all hear. [*Exit.*

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Yes; all must hear. [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

My presence may be necessary. [*Going.*

Capt. BYGROVE.

Millamour, stay and give me joy.

MIL-

MILLAMOUR.

Of what?

Capt. BYGROVE.

The idol of my heart! To-morrow makes her mine.

MILLAMOUR.

Well, I give you joy. Who is ſhe?

Capt. BYGROVE.

My Lady Bell, thou dear fellow: come, let us go and ſee what they are about?

MILLAMOUR.

Let us go and ſee who ſhall cut the other's throat.

Capt. BYGROVE.

A pleaſant employment.

MILLAMOUR.

You ſhall tear this heart out, before you tear Lady Bell from me.

Capt. BYGROVE.

Very well; have your frolic—This works as I could wiſh. [*Exit.*

MILLAMOUR.

Deſpair and phrenzy! if ſhe is capable of a treachery like this——

Enter

Enter Lady BELL.

Lady BELL.

You have done ſome good at laſt, Mr. Millamour.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell! *(pauſes and looks at her)* I once thought——but you will break my heart.

Lady BELL.

It will bend a little, but never break.

MILLAMOUR.

Will you liſten to me? There is a tyrant fair, and you have intereſt with her; you can ſerve me; all the joys of life are center'd there.

Lady BELL. *(ſmiles aſide)*

He is mine againſt the world. And ſo you want my intereſt? That's lucky, for I have a favour to requeſt of you.

MILLAMOUR.

Is there a favour in the power of man, you may not command at my hands?

Lady BELL.

You are very good, Sir; there is a perſon, but the levity of his temper———

MILLAMOUR. *(aſide)*

She means me——Your beauty will reclaim him.

Lady

Lady BELL. (*ſmiles at him*)
May I rely upon you?

MILLAMOUR.
What an angel look there was. And do you aſk the queſtion?

Lady BELL.
When ſincere affection——

MILLAMOUR.
It is generous to own it.

Lady BELL.
And ſince the impreſſion made by——

MILLAMOUR.
Do not heſitate.

Lady BELL.
Made by Captain Bygrove——

MILLAMOUR.
Made by Captain Bygrove (*turns away*)

Lady BELL.
That wounds deep—and if you will aſſiſt my fond, fond hopes,—It will be generous indeed.

MILLAMOUR.
This is a blow I never looked for—Yes, Ma'am, it

it will be generous,—and in return, if you will intercede for me with Lady Bell——po! with a—with Lady Jane, I ſay—I ſay if you will intercede for me with Lady Jane——

Lady Bell.

Oh! by all means. And as I approve of your choice, *(he walks away, ſhe follows him)* I hope you will approve of mine; and by mutual acts of friendſhip, we may promote each other's happineſs.

Enter Dashwould.

Dashwould.

Malvil is detected.

Lady Bell.

And Sir Harry has ſettled every thing with Miſs Neville. Go and wiſh him joy. *(Exit Daſhwould)* My ſweet friend will be happy at laſt. *(going)*

Millamour. *(taking her hand)*

But you won't marry the Captain?

Lady Bell.

Will you make intereſt for me?

Millamour.

How can you torment me thus?

Lady Bell.

You have done ſome ſervice, and you may now entertain a degree of hope. *(ſmiling at him)* But have you another copy of verſes for my aunt?

Mil-

MILLAMOUR.

How can you? (*kiſſes her hand*; *Exit Lady Bell*) ——She yields, and I am bleſſed indeed.

Enter BYGROVE, MALVIL, *and* Capt. BYGROVE.

BYGROVE.

The fact is too clear, Mr. Malvil.

MALVIL.

And ſhall the word of that French impoſtor——

MILLAMOUR.

She has acted fairly, Sir; what reparation can you make the lady whoſe ruin you have attempted?

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley promiſed her a fortune, and I have promiſed her marriage.

Enter DASHWOULD.

DASHWOULD.

And I forbid the banns. Sir Harry has concluded a match with Miſs Neville: I ſhould have thought him ridiculous, if he had not.

MALVIL.

That you will do, whether he deſerves it or not.

MILLAMOUR.

You, Sir, deſerve ſomething worſe than ridicule. You are thoroughly underſtood. Your tenderneſs for

for your neighbour, is malignant curiosity; your half hints, that hesitate slander, speak the louder; and your silence, that affects to suppress what you know, is a mute, that strangles.

MALVIL.

The probity of my character, Sir——

DASHWOULD.

Ay, probity is the word. He has had pretty perquisites from his probity; legacies, trust money, and the confidence of families. For aught I see, probity is as good a trade as any a going.

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

MALVIL.

The still voice of truth is lost: you are all in a combination.

BYGROVE.

And you have forced me to be of the number.

Enter Mrs. BROMLEY.

MALVIL.

Mrs. Bromley! you will judge with candour.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Oh! Sir, it is all too plain.

MAL-

MALVIL.

It is in vain to contend: I ſhall be cautious what I ſay of any of you: my heart is with you all.

[*Exit.*

BYGROVE.

Farewell, hypocrite!

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

Enter Lady BELL, Miſs NEVILLE, Sir HARRY, *and* Lady JANE.

Lady BELL.

Here, Sir Harry, in the preſence of this company, I give you, in this friend of mine, truth, good ſenſe, and virtue. Take her, Sir, and now you have got a treaſure.

Sir HARRY. (*to Miſs Neville*)

It ſhall be my pride to raiſe you to that ſphere of life, which your merit, and your ſufferings from——

(*looks at Mrs. Bromley*)

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Why fix on me, Sir?

Sir HARRY.

They are much miſtaken, who can find no way of ſhewing their ſuperior rank, but by letting their weight fall on thoſe, whom fortune has placed beneath them.

DASH

DASHWOULD.

And that ſentiment, however I may rattle, I wiſh impreſſed upon all the patrons of poor relations, throughout his Majeſty's dominions.

Miſs NEVILLE.

Mrs. Bromley, I have much to ſay to you. My obligations to you, I ſhall never forget. I am not aſhamed, even in the preſence of Sir Harry, to own the diſtreſs in which you found me. If at any time I have given offence; if under your diſpleaſure, I have been impatient, you will allow for an education that raiſed me much above my circumſtances. That education ſhall teach me to act as becomes Sir Harry's Lady, with affection, with duty to him; and to you, madam, with gratitude, for that bounty which ſaved me from calamity and ruin.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

Your words overpower me. I feel that I have done wrong. I now ſee, that to demand in return, for favours conferred, an abject ſpirit, and mean compliance, is the worſt uſury ſociety knows of. I rejoice at your good fortune: your merit deſerves it.

(they embrace)

DASHWOULD.

Why this is as it ſhould be.——Mr. Bygrove, I hope ſoon to wiſh you joy.

BYGROVE.

Compared to Malvil, thou art an honeſt fellow, and I thank you.

DASHWOULD.

Millamour, is there no recompence for your virtue? In a modern comedy, you would be rewarded with a wife.

MILLAMOUR.

Lady Bell has more than poetical juſtice in her power. I wiſh Sir John were here: he would now ſee me reclaimed from every folly, by that lady.

Mrs. BROMLEY.

If it is ſo, I can now congratulate you both.

Lady BELL.

It is even ſo, aunt; the whim of the preſent moment. Mr. Millamour has ſerved my amiable friend, and I have promiſed him my hand——and ſo *(holds up both hands)* which will you have? Puzzle about it, and know your own mind if you can.

MILLAMOUR.

With rapture thus I ſnatch it to my heart.

Lady BELL.

Siſter, what Nunnery will you go to? Mr. Bygrove, command your ſon to take her.

Capt. BYGROVE.

That command I have obeyed already.

Lady

Lady JANE.

Since the truth muſt out; we made uſe of a ſtratagem to fix my ſiſter, and that gentleman.

Lady BELL.

To fix yourſelf, if you pleaſe. I knew you would be married before me.

MILLAMOUR.

Daſhwould, give me your hand. Your wit ſhall enliven our ſocial hours, and while I laugh with you at the events of life, you ſhall ſee me endeavour to weed out of my own mind every folly.

DASHWOULD.

You do me honour, Sir. And, if Mr. Bygrove will now and then give and take a joke——

BYGROVE.

As often as you pleaſe: but take my advice, and don't loſe your friend for your joke.

DASHWOULD.

By no means, Mr. Bygrove;——except now and then, when the friend is the worſt of the two.

MILLAMOUR.

Well, there is ſome weight in Mr. Bygrove's obſervation:

—and yet, as Daſhwould ſays, converſation without a zeſt of wit, may flatten into a ſort of inſipidity, and——

Lady Bell.

Oh! to be ſure: change your mind about it.

Millamour.

There is one ſubject, Lady Bell, upon which my mind will never change. The varieties of life, till now diſtracted my attention.

But when our hearts victorious beauty draws,
We feel its pow'r, and own its ſov'reign laws;
To that ſubſervient all our paſſions move,
And ev'n my conſtancy ſhall ſpring from love.

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr. GARRICK.

Spoken by Mrs. MATTOCKS.

IF after Tragedy 'tis made a rule,
To jeſt no more, I'll be no titt'ring fool,
To jog you with a joke in Tragic doze,
And ſhake the dew-drops from the weeping roſe.
Prudes of each ſex affirm, and who denies?
That in each tear a whimp'ring Cupid lies.
To ſuch wiſe formal folk, my anſwer's ſimple;
A thouſand Cupids revel in a dimple!
From thoſe ſoft neſts, with laughter, out they ruſh,
Perch'd on your heads, like ſmall birds in a buſh.
Beauty reſiſtleſs in each ſmile appears:
Are you for dimples, ladies, or for tears?
Dare they in Comedy our mirth abridge?
Let us ſtand up for giggling privilege;
Aſſert our rights, that laughter is no ſin,
From the ſcrew'd ſimper, *to the* broad-fac'd grin.
So much for ſelf; now turn we to the Poet:
" KNOW YOUR OWN MIND."---*Are any here who know it?*
To know one's mind is a hard taſk indeed,
And harder ſtill for us, by all agreed.
Cards, balls, beaux, feathers, round the eddy whirling,
Change every moment, while the hair is curling.
The Greeks ſay---" Know Thyſelf "---*I'm ſure I find,*
I know Myſelf *that I don't* Know my Mind.
Know you *your minds, wiſe Men?---Come, let us try.*
I have a worthy cit there in my eye; (looking up)
Tho' he to ſneer at us takes much delight,
He cannot fix where he ſhall go to-night:
His pleaſure and his peace are now at ſtrife,
He loves his bottle, and he fears his wife.

He'l

He'll quit this houſe, not knowing what to do;
The Shakeſpear's Head *firſt gives a pull or two,*
But with a ſideling ſtruggle he gets through.
Darts acroſs Ruſſel-ſtreet: then with new charms,
The Syren, Luxury, his boſom warms,
And draws him in the vortex of the Bedford Arms.
Happy this night!---But when comes wife and ſorrow?
"To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow."
I ſee ſome laughers here; pray which of you
Know your own Minds?---in all this houſe but few!
Wits *never know their Minds*;---*our* Minor Bards,
Changing from bad to worſe, now ſpin Charades.
O'er Law *and* Phyſic *we will draw a curtain*;
There nothing but uncertainty is certain:
Grave looks, wigs, coats,---the Doctors now relinquiſh 'em,
They're right,---from Undertakers *to diſtinguiſh 'em.*
The Courtiers, *do 'em juſtice, never doubt,*
Whether 'tis better to be in *or* out.
Some Patriots *too, know their own mind and plan*;
They're firmly fix'd, to get in *when they can*;
Gameſters *don't waver*; *they all* hazards *run,*
For ſome muſt cheat, and more muſt be undone.
Great Stateſmen *know their minds, but ne'er reveal 'em*;
We never knew their *ſecrets, 'till we feel 'em.*
Grant me a favour, Critics, don't ſay nay;
Be of one Mind *with me, and like this Play*;
Thence will two wonders riſe: Wits will be kind,
Nay more---behold a Woman Knows her Mind!

THE

THE

SCHOOL

FOR

GUARDIANS:

A

COMEDY,

IN THREE ACTS.

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

COVENT-GARDEN.

——— Subitum, et miſerabile longum
Attendit Thymele; Thymele tunc ruſtica diſcit.

Juv.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Miſs ELLIOT.

MAY I intrude upon your patience for a minute?
Ladies and gentlemen, before the opening of the play,
Juſt to excuſe an accident, which I hope has no miſchief in it,
I fain, if you'll permit, a word or two would ſay.
I hope you'll not be angry; but we've got no prologue for to-night,
And ſo I thought it was beſt to come and tell ye all the truth downright.
I went to our Poet, and I ſpoke to him all I could,
But he ſaid he had not leiſure, tho' I know it's in his power if he would.
'A prologue, ma'am," ſays he!—"Yes, Sir, a prologue if you pleaſe."
And then I did ſo entreat the man, and beg, and pray, and teaze.
I told him, "You know, Sir, what a miſerable plight we all are in,
To frown upon the performers, when pit, box, and gallery begin;
Whu—go the catcalls—dub—dub—dub---each dreadfull critick's ſtick
Prólog'—*throw him over—won't ye ha ſome orange chips*
---Prólôgué---Cries o' London--Muſick!"
All this and more I ſaid, but he, determin'd ſtill,

In

In formal fuſtian thus declar'd his will.
" *Oft have I tried*" [ſeems puzzled]—*ſomething about his ſtile,*
And how he felt the town's indulgent ſmile.
" *Were I again to try my ſcanty vein,*
I'd beg protection for the feeble ſtrain.
But then to ſue—he paus'd and rubb'd his head—
To ſue—when fam'd MOLIERE *the ſtage doth tread,*
Were to profane the manes of the dead.
MOLIERE, *of old, and ſtill with rapture ſeen,*
The legiſlator of the comic ſcene!
To bid his SIMPLE GIRL *aſſert the ſtage,*
And, if ſhe pleaſes, ſtrive to mend the age,
This was my motive; this my only aim;
Heedleſs of gain; no candidate for fame.
An audience will weigh all in equal ſcales,
For juſtice, and not party, here prevails."
Thus ſpoke the bard, and then with long ſteps march'd away;
And now I am left alone to apologize for this night's play.
We'll ſtrive to make you laugh, if our aim be not perverted:
Pray, how d'ye find yourſelves?—Are ye in good humour, and willing to be diverted?
If you approve,
The Leidger Critic *then no more I'll dread,*
Who points his malice at a woman's head!

Who

Who drop by drop his venom doth diſtil,
While MOTHER DULLNESS *guides the hireling's quill.*
Lull'd in her lap, ſtrange wonders he deſcries,
And TERENCE *ſeems—a Frenchman to his eyes!*
From thence he iſſues foul decrees on plays,
Adorns with ſcandal, and lampoons with praiſe.
One ſmile from you defeats the ſland'rer's aim;
His calumny, like your APPLAUSE, *is fame.*
From your applauſe our mimic glories riſe;
In pleaſing you my whole ambition lies.

DRA-

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

Brumpton,	Mr. Woodward.
Belford,	Mr. Smith.
Oldcastle,	Mr. Shuter.
Lovibond,	Mr. Dunstall.
Brisk,	Mr. Dyer.
Peter,	Mr. Morgan.

W O M E N.

Mary Ann,	Miſs Elliot.
Harriet,	Miſs Wilford.
Bridget,	Mrs. Mahon.

Scene L O N D O N.

THE

School for Guardians,

A

COMEDY.

ACT the FIRST.

Enter BRUMPTON, *and* BRISK.

BRUMPTON.

IS my father gone out, Brisk?

BRISK.

Yes, Sir;—Sir Theodore is gone out.

BRUMPTON.

We have been pretty handsomely lectured here this morning, Brisk.

BRISK

BRISK.

Yes, Sir, we have had wherewithal to edify ourſelves. I ſuppoſe we ſhall lie at Tom Tilbury's at Bagſhot to-night, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

Where?

BRISK.

Tom Tilbury's, Sir; only juſt to break the neck of our journey: for I ſuppoſe now, you'll drop all thoughts of this other lady—I forget her name—— Ay! Miſs Mary Ann Richley—ſhe has no chance now, I reckon, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

Why, you ſenſeleſs numſkull!—As ſure as I am Charles Brumpton, Eſq; ſhe ſhall be Mrs. Brumpton; and upon the death of my very good father, ſhe'll be a baronet's lady, that's all.

BRISK.

And yet there is ſome truth in what Sir Theodore ſays. Beauty is but a frail, periſhable ſort of a commodity; and if you are diſinherited for it, the lady's charms will not pay your poor ſervant, Briſk, his board-wages; a feature, or a ſmile can't go to market; a pawn-broker will lend nothing upon the tip of an ear: though indeed ſhe may mortage her perſon; but that I take it will be for her own advantage; we ſhall get nothing but a comely pair of horns by it, Sir, with ſubmiſſion.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Why you talk a frothy kind of nothing at a tolerable rate, Brisk.

BRISK.

I have shewn you one side of the medal, now behold the reverse, Sir. When you marry an ugly woman, there is no great pleasure, to be sure, in beholding her: but then the woman has some valuable parchments, such as leases, bonds, and mortgages; and I, Sir, shall live in tolerable plight with you, which to so good a master——

BRUMPTON.

Leave prating, sirrah, and do as I ordered you: put on your farmer's dress, go directly to the object I adore; let her know you are come from her guardian in the country, and have his orders to take her home under your care. Convey her safe to my arms, and I shall reward you.

BRISK.

But, Sir——

BRUMPTON.

No arguing: about it straight.

BRISK.

You know how many blanketings and blows I have suffered in your service, Sir.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Sirrah, no words. Go and ſee who's at the door.

BRISK.

You have marred many an excellent plot of mine, Sir. You know you cannot help meddling, when I undertake a ſcheme. If you'll promiſe me, Sir, not to——

BRUMPTON.

Will you ſee who's at the door?

BRISK.

I am gone, Sir. [*Exit.*

BRUMPTON.

Ha! ha!—I ſhall moſt certainly carry her off. How Sir Theodore will be aſtoniſhed when he finds ſhe is an heireſs! ha! ha!---it is the pleaſanteſt adventure.

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD.

Brumpton, good-morrow!----always in ſpirits, I ſee.

BRUMPTON.

My dear Belford, nothing depreſſes my ſpirits: though you thought they were too high laſt night, and were for letting me a little blood. You make no-

nothing of displaying an ell of sword-blade in defence of your mistress's top-knot.

BELFORD.

Why you know I love too tenderly to bear the test of raillery: it is the infirmity of my temper; why would you put me to it?

BRUMPTON.

And you that know my turn of mind, why would you be angry with me? If in your phrase I am a coxcomb, with all my heart, i'faith! but take this along with you; what you mean as a term of reproach, I receive as a compliment to the materials nature has been pleased to compound in this happy frame of mine.

BELFORD.

If self-applause be philosophy, you have a comfortable share.

BRUMPTON.

I have, Sir, and while my happiness is preserved by it, keep you the gravity and good sense, that make you too refined to be pleased, too wise to be merry, and too knowing to be contented. I am in a fair way to be successful, without any trouble at all; you are likely to be most scurvily disappointed after a world of pains. An humble bow, which my dancing-master taught me, while I laughed at him; a fashionable coat, for which, if my taylor is ever paid, he will laugh at me; an intriguing snuff-box, and an apt valet de chambre, all these make love for me, and——

BELFORD.

And you assume the merit of the conquest.

BRUMPTON.

Oh! yes, when the trouble is over, I take the reward. Did you ever know a general officer, who, when the horse and the foot, and the right and left wing have carried the day for him, did not claim to himself both the honour and the booty? But you make a toil of a pleasure: love, which to me is a scene of delight, to you is a drudgery; your temper grows as sour as a prude's when the sermon is long; and as hot as a Welshman, if you laugh at his pedigree; or a professed sharper, if you doubt his honour, after he has cogged the dice, and picked your pocket of your money.

BELFORD.

Why I own I am piqued, and naturally, If any friend of mine, out of mere spleen, speak detractingly of the person I admire. Absent I see her, hear her, and my imagination gloats on her every charm.

BRUMPTON.

And you are so easily alarmed, that little difficulties are the Alps and Pireneans in your way. Now my faith in these matters removes mountains. But indeed in all things we are opposite characters: you sigh, I sing; you fret, I am gay; you upon a disappointment, "Furies, death, and rage!"——I burst into a laugh, and what a whimsical world we live in?—ha! ha!——But come, I will hear your melancholy story. Well, the old dragon, I suppose, watches the Hesperian fruit.

BEL-

BELFORD.

He does, Sir: he keeps her locked up, as a miſer does his gold, not to be made uſe of till his death, and then to fall into hands that won't know the value of it. She is inacceſſible, and her guardian, old Lovibond, propoſes to marry her himſelf.

BRUMPTON.

And ſo like the tyrant of old, intends to tack a living and dead body together.

BELFORD.

Even ſo: my dear Brumpton, there ſhould be an act of parliament to hinder theſe old fellows from ſtopping the propagation of the ſpecies.

BRUMPTON.

You are too hard upon 'em: they are ſeldom guilty of that miſchief. I have known 'em have twins at a birth; that is, when ſome ſuch coxcomb as myſelf gives them a helping hand; and then the old fellow cocks his hat upon it, and totters about ſo vigorouſly, wondering how the babes reſemble him in every particular; whilſt the mother knows, that ſhe followed the example of the Grecian painter, and took a feature from every one of her acquaintance. If he prevents your marrying her, take your revenge that way.

BELFORD.

How abſurd! her heart I am ſure is mine. I uſed to viſit there; but now no admittance.

BRUMPTON.

Now my buſineſs goes on without any trouble or difficulty. My old dragon is in the country, and has left his fair ward, the ſweeteſt girl, my dear Belford——

BELFORD.

You deſcribed her yeſterday, but few removes from an idiot.

BRUMPTON.

Pardon me: ſhe is ſimple indeed, but ſuch a ſimplicity! It juſt ſerves to ſhew that injuſtice has been done her in her education, but in her every turn ſhe gives ſuch tokens of ſenſibility! ſhe has beauty without knowing it; certain wild graces, rather than accompliſhments, and talents inſtead of ſenſe.

BELFORD.

Po! a mere ruſtic beauty.

BRUMPTON.

There now, derogating from her merit, and yet I am calm! The truth is ſhe has been brought up in the country, and wickedly kept in ignorance, that ſhe might fall an eaſy prey to her guardian. But I have raiſed a ſpirit in her.

BELFORD.

And how the devil did you gain acceſs to her?

BRUMPTON.

I was going to tell you. Old Neſtor is out of town, and

and has left her in the care of the two verieſt ſimpletons that ever whiſtled for want of thought at a country fair: but gold, Sir, gold, that ſpeaks all languages, and adapts itſelf to all capacities, has pleaded moſt eloquently for me. But, come, I poſitively muſt leave you.

BELFORD.

Nay, if it muſt be ſo——

BRUMPTON.

My dear Belford, Cupid direct your arrows——

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *a Street.*

Enter LOVIBOND, *and* OLDCASTLE.

LOVIBOND.

And but this moment returned, Mr. Oldcaſtle!

OLDCASTLE.

Juſt this moment ſtepped out of the machine.

LOVIBOND.

Well! and now I ſuppoſe you have prudently laid aſide all thoughts of matrimony.

OLDCASTLE.

You are a comical man, brother Lovibond. I have taken my meaſures; to-morrow makes me a bridegroom, and my fair ward, Miſs Mary Ann, a bride.

LOVIBOND.

And a little time will make you——

OLDCASTLE.

Happy: tho', by that ſignificant look, you have your doubts.

LOVIBOND.

I have, Sir: I have a ſhrewd gueſs that——

OLDCASTLE.

Then you'll be out in your gueſs.

LOVIBOND.

I wiſh your horns a'n't out firſt.

OLDCASTLE.

Well ſaid, and without any apprehenſion for yourſelf. You are ſtill determined to marry Mary Ann's ſiſter Harriet I ſuppoſe.

LOVIBOND.

That's quite another buſineſs; what I do, is no rule for your actions.

OLDCASTLE.

It is as I ever ſaid: each man is ſtill looking at the hump upon his neighbour's back, but never thinks of caſting an eye over his own ſhoulder. I warrant me now you, in your grand climacteric, will tell me I am old.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Full ten years before me in the race of life. Beſides, you are a ſuperannurated batchelor; a ſtranger to the ways of wedlock. I am enured to the ſervice. Your ſiſter, Mr. Oldcaſtle, could have told you what a deſperate good huſband I was. But, lack a day! you begin late. Mercy on your forehead, ſay I, mercy on your forehead!

OLDCASTLE.

How blind ſome people are when they have taken a thing in their heads!—ha! ha!

LOVIBOND.

Well! well! laugh on. But you that have been for ever a cenſor of your neighbours, for ever fleering and jibing at the married ſtate——

OLDCASTLE.

And a pleaſant topic it is! why matrimony affords a little comedy in every family one knows. Now the education I have given Mary Ann———

LOVIBOND.

Is the worſt in the world.

OLDCASTLE.

The very beſt! I have trained her up in plain ſimplicity. Woman's wit teems with contrivances to diſgrace her huſband. Yet you would educate Harriet in this profligate town!

LOVIBOND.

Ay, and I have taught her to know right from wrong.

OLDCASTLE.

You have indulged her in every whimſy this fertile town affords.

LOVIBOND.

I have ſhewn her the world.

OLDCASTLE.

Have not you carried her to plays?

LOVIBOND.

To ſee folly ridiculed.

OLDCASTLE.

To profligate comedies?

LOVIBOND.

The ſtage is the ſchool of virtue.

OLDCASTLE.

The ſchool of ſin and impudence!

LOVIBOND.

Where vice undergoes the laſh of ſatire.

OLDCASTLE.

Where vice is made alluring, provoking!

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Where young ladies may learn——

OLDCASTLE.

The uſe of dark-cloſets, back-ſtairs, and ladders of rope.

LOVIBOND.

Where they may learn to put on the veil of modeſty.

OLDCASTLE.

To put on the breeches, and eſcape from their guardians.

LOVIBOND.

Where they are taught to reſpect grey-headed authority!

OLDCASTLE.

To make a cuckold of authority! I know the ways of 'em all! their cards, routs, operas, Soho-aſſemblies, all contrivances to excite curioſity, kindle deſire, prompt inclination, and ſend 'em all dancing a jig to deſtruction.

LOVIBOND.

Common-place invective! Harriet will know how to avoid——

OLDCASTLE.

She will know how to deceive you.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

She will have too much honour.

OLDCASTLE.

She will have too much wit. Now Mary-Ann has no wild notions, and of courſe no dangerous curioſity.

LOVIBOND.

Her curioſity is to come. She will fall a prey to the firſt powdered coxcomb that bows to her.

OLDCASTLE.

Her ſimplicity will preſerve her.

LOVIBOND.

But when the ſerpents of this town begin to whiſper in her ear——

OLDCASTLE.

They'll have no opportunity. She is ſnug in a little box of a houſe, which I have taken in the name of Mr. Biddulph. I have another lodging in my own name, where I tranſact my affairs. Nobody will ſee her; and when the nine day's wonder is over, I ſhall pack off to the country, and ſo eſcape from impertinence.

LOVIBOND.

Well! well! I can't but laugh at your ſyſtem of education! Ha! ha! marry her if you will; and then, on account of your age and infirmities, you may

may do the buſineſs of your office by deputy. Ha! ha! a plan of ſimplicity! [*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

Brother Lovibond, a good day to you——I wiſh you ſucceſs——Ha! ha! a town-education for a young girl!

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

How her old goaler will look when he returns to town, and finds ſhe has broke priſon!——Hey! is not that Mr. Oldcaſtle?

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Brumpton!——I rejoice to ſee you.

BRUMPTON.

My dear friend, you are come in the very criſis of my fate.

OLDCASTLE.

Recover your ſenſes a little, and tell me at your leiſure what is this mighty buſineſs.

BRUMPTON.

Oh! buſineſs of ſuch a nature!

OLDCASTLE.

You are in requeſt among the ladies, no doubt——Now will he lie like an attorney's clerk. (*aſide*) You are going to help ſome worthy gentleman to an heir to his eſtate, I warrant me.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

I am going to help my father to a grandſon.

OLDCASTLE.

Going to be married!

BRUMPTON.

This day may perhaps crown my joys. Some certain fumblers at this end of the town, who were a little alarmed at the proportions of this leg, intend to light their windows upon it; the Court of Aldermen is preparing all demonſtrations of joy; and their unhappy wives are going into deep mourning upon the occaſion!

OLDCASTLE.

The ſame confident fop he ever was! Well, and my friend Sir Theodore, what ſays he to all this?

BRUMPTON.

You know his way; the ſame old crabbed humour. He has made a match for me elſewhere with one that——I would not deny the lady her merit——ſhe preſerves and pickles well, and is a very notable keeper of accounts.

OLDCASTLE.

She has a fortune, I preſume.

BRUMPTON.

Does not want acres.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

And you prefer one without any.

BRUMPTON.

You miſtake me! ſhe's an heireſs; it is not clear that ſhe is of age, but as ſoon as ſhe comes to years of diſcretion——

OLDCASTLE.

Then ſhe may play the fool as faſt as ſhe will. But how did you bring this about, pray?

BRUMPTON.

An old way that I have: I came, ſaw, and conquered. I ſaw her at her window——Such blooming ſweetneſs! Her eyes were through my heart at once: love inſpired me with due courage.

OLDCASTLE.

That was right: a bold ſtroke for a wife.

BRUMPTON.

I drank tea with her the very next evening. I muſt indeed admit, that her underſtandiug is not the moſt accompliſhed.

OLDCASTLE.

So beſt: never marry a wit.

BRUMPTON.

She is at preſent rather in a ſtate of ignorance: but from thoſe blue eyes ſhe occaſionally darts ſuch glances,

glances, as beſpeak a mind ſuſceptible of the higheſt refinement.

OLDCASTLE.

Where does ſhe live?

BRUMPTON.

In the very next ſtreet.

OLDCASTLE.

What that ſtreet there?

BRUMPTON.

Yes, that: under the care of the verieſt muck-worm!

OLDCASTLE.

He means me, I fear. (*aſide*) And her name, pray?

BRUMPTON.

Miſs Mary Ann Richley.

OLDCASTLE.

Wounds! what a diſcovery here is! (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON.

Her guardian's name is Biddulph. Perhaps you may know him.

OLDCASTLE.

No, not I. The young rake-hell! (*aſide*)

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

He means to abuſe his truſt, and confine youth and beauty within the arms of age and uglineſs. There's an old rogue for you! Does not he deſerve to be hanged?

OLDCASTLE.

What a young villain! *(aſide)*

BRUMPTON.

I beg your pardon: I did not hear.

OLDCASTLE.

I am ſeized with an ugly fit of coughing—— *(coughs)* But you ſhould conſider; the marriage-act is very ſtrict, and requires the conſent of prudent people.

BRUMPTON.

Po! that's nothing. Abuſe Scotland as they will, it enables us to evade the laws of England. Well now, adieu!——Oh! I forgot to tell you. She'll be mine this very day. Briſk, my fellow, who is a footman of talents, is to go to her as a tenant from the country, come to town with old Biddulph's commands to carry her down with him in the fly. She is ſo ſimple ſhe will believe it; and the oafs about her will bite like gudgeons; and ſo ——ha! ha!——I kindle into rapture. I muſt fly to know the happy tidings.—Did you ever know ſo happy an adventure? [*Exit.*

OLD-

OLDCASTLE. (*alone*)

I never knew ſo abandoned a young profligate, nor ſo vile an adventure!—I'll ſtep and make ſure of Mary-Ann this moment. [*Exit.*

SCENE LOVIBOND'S *Houſe.*

Enter HARRIET.

HARRIET.

To be locked up in this manner with an old rogue of a guardian!—Mr. Belford! Mr. Belford! why won't you be my deliverer? He knows I like him; I have told him ſo a thouſand times; that is my eyes have told him ſo; and yet he undertakes nothing. Ah! my dear protector! (*ſeeing Lovibond*)

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

My bloſſom!——my lovely little ward! to-morrow makes you the queen of my heart. But you muſt be mild in authority, for you know——

HARRIET.

Yes, I know how tender you have been. Your confining me here ſo many days, is to me a proof of the tendereſt love.

LOVIBOND.

Yes, it is a mark of my affection.

HARRIET.

There are many reaſons why I ſhould not venture abroad; more than you dream of.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

You alarm me: what reaſons?

HARRIET.

Why the danger is——No——you'll be for fighting the odious man.

LOVIBOND.

No——I'll not fight——I'll live for you.

HARRIET.

But will you follow my advice, and ſpeak to him calmly, without paſſion?

LOVIBOND.

I will. Let me hear: what's the matter?

HARRIET.

Why that Mr. Belford, whoſe viſits you uſed to encourage—

LOVIBOND.

I have not liked him a good while—what of him?

HARRIET.

Oh! he's a wicked man. He has vile deſigns in his head, and would fain have me liſten to his propoſals.

LOVIBOND.

The impudence of the young men of this age!

HARRIET.

Your back is no ſooner turned, than he raps at the door, and at the windows, and diſgraces me with all the neighbours. My character will be ruined, (*pretends to cry*) unleſs you find ſome method to—

LOVIBOND.

Don't be alarmed, my ſweet: I'll bar my doors, and you ſhan't ſtir out this twelvemonth.

HARRIET.

That won't do.

LOVIBOND.

Then you ſhall never go out at all.

HARRIET.

That's ſome comfort. But in the mean time to have my reputation blaſted by an abandoned libertine—(*ſhe cries*) Cæſar's wife ſhould not only be virtuous, but free from ſuſpicion.

LOVIBOND.

The ſenſible girl! this is owing to her education. Her ſiſter Mary-Ann could not make ſuch a remark. I'll go and ſwear the peace againſt him.

HARRIET.

I wiſh you would.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

I'll do it directly. I'll let him know by a juſtice's warrant that Cæſar's wife is not to be trifled with.

HARRIET.

And pray tell him, I hate him; that he may come as often as he will under my window, but it will be to no purpoſe, for I ſhall not endeavour to let him in.

LOVIBOND.

He ſhall hear it.

HARRIET.

Let him know that, though he is young, and handſome, all his charms are loſt upon me.

LOVIBOND.

I'll do it.

HARRIET.

Tell him you have been a father to me: that I conſider you ſtill as my father, and that I think it unnatural to love giddy young men, when I can be ſo much better off with you.

LOVIBOND.

He ſhall hear it on every ſide of his ears.

HARRIET.

Ay, but without loſs of time. I ſhan't be eaſy till he knows my mind.

LOVIBOND.

Nor I. It is fit he ſhould know your mind.

HARRIET.

Yes, and tell him, if he ſhould come when you are out, not all his winning ways ſhall prevail on me to run away with him.

LOVIBOND.

You have charmed me; tranſported me; raviſhed me; get up ſtairs. I'll ſeek him this moment——Ha! ha!——this all ſprings from her good ſenſe: this is knowing right from wrong——ha! ha!

[*Exit.*

HARRIET.

Be ſure you tell him every word——and if Mr. Belford does but underſtand every word as I intend it, then I may ſtill wing my flight to his dear arms. A new ſcheme this of mine! But love inſpired it, and love may crown it with ſucceſs. [*Exit.*

SCENE OLDCASTLE'S *Houſe.*

Enter PETER *and* BRIDGET.

PETER.

Yes, yes, Bridget; the gentleman's generous enow, for a matter o'that.

BRIDGET.

And pray, Peter, do the London folk always give money

money to the like of we, as often as they come in or out of the houſe?

PETER.

Ay! zure, and the ſarving folk call it wails. Why, Bridget, poor ſarvants would not be able to ape all their maſter's follies, and powder like fine gentry, and curſe and ſwear like Lords, an ſo be every body did not give at ſtreet door more than any thing they get in the houſe is worth.

BRIDGET.

La! well that's pure, ſure enow!

PETER.

As to me, do ye zee, I does not care how often the gentleman comes, and for a matter o'that, I does not care how long maſter ſtays in the country.

BRIDGET.

Theſe London ways are comical, that's for ſure. (*a rap at the door*) More griſe to the mill. Go and open the door, Peter.

PETER.

Go yourſelf, an you go to that.

BRIDGET.

I ſhall budge none, not I.

PETER.

Nor I, faith and troth! (*another rap*)

BRIDGET.

Law, how can you be ſo croſs?

PETER.

You put all upon me, that's your way. Who's at the door?

OLDCASTLE. (*within*)

Open the door, you varlets, open the door.

BRIDGET.

Oh! it's maſter. I'll go.

PETER.

Maſter!——then I'll go.

BRIDGET.

Stand out of the way, can't you?

PETER.

Stand away yourſelf: I be ready, ben't I?

BRIDGET.

Farther a field, will you?

OLDCASTLE. (*rapping*)

Within there, open the door, I ſay.

BRIDGET.

Call here to Peter: he won't let a body.

PETER.

Nobody ſhall but I. (*opens the door*) Sarvant, maſter.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

BRIDGET.

Welcome home, maſter.

OLDCASTLE.

Why am I to wait thus?

PETER.

PETER.

It was all her doings.

BRIDGET.

It was all his doings as well as I.

OLDCASTLE.

Peace, numſkulls! how is every body at home?

PETER.

Charmingly well.

BRIDGET.

All in pure health, praiſe for every thing; and Miſs Mary Ann ſings about the houſe like a little bird in a cage.

OLDCASTLE.

Has not ſhe been melancholy ſince I went into the country?

BRIDGET.

No, Lord love her, not ſhe.

OLDCASTLE.

No! *(in a paſſion)*

BRIDGET.

Yes!—how terrible he looks!

OLDCASTLE.

Did not ſhe long for my return?

PETER.

Hugeouſly! ſo we did all.

OLDCASTLE.

Vixen! jade! villain! raſcal!

PETER.

I'm down o'my knees——

BRIDGET.

So be I—merciful father, how——

OLDCASTLE.

You have obeyed my orders, have you?

PETER.

He'll murder us both, as ſure as a gun.

OLDCASTLE.

What you are ſneaking away, are you? Oh! it's all too true. Come back, or——

BRIDGET.

Yes, Sir.

PETER.

No, Sir.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Mary Ann! Mary Ann!——I could never have imagined---call Mary Ann hither——

BOTH.

Yes, Sir. *(they run out)*

OLDCASTLE.

Now will they plot, and put their heads together —Mary Ann!---Mary Ann!---Oh! here ſhe comes.

Enter

Enter MARY ANN, *playing with a cup and ball, and singing.*

MARY-ANN.

So, you be come, I see.

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, I am come home.

MARY-ANN.

Better late than never. I began to think as how you had forgot poor I. I expected you all the live-long day, so I did; and there did not go by a coach or a cart, or a horse or an ass, but I thought it was you. Ah! I am glad you're come. What's the matter? Ben't you well?

OLDCASTLE.

You have been very well, I hope, since I left you.

MARY-ANN.

Oh! yes, purely. Neither sick nor sorry, not I. By goles, that is not true neither, for last night——

OLDCASTLE.

Last night!-- what of last night?

MARY-ANN.

Little Pompey barked so all night long, I could not sleep a wink.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Is that all? You have not been out any where, have you?

MARY-ANN.

Out!---law, where ſhould I go? I don't like going out in this ſtrange outlandiſh place. I like the country better by half.

OLDCASTLE.

Well! well! you ſhall go back ſoon.

MARY-ANN.

But then mayn't I go and ſee ſiſter Harriet firſt? an ill natured thing that's what ſhe is: ſhe has not been to ſee poor I, ever ſince I came to the great town.

OLDCASTLE.

You ſhall ſee her. So you paſſed your time very merrily!

MARY-ANN.

Never better in all my days. But you don't ſeem glad to ſee a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, yes; I am glad to ſee you. The little Jezabel won't tell me a word (*aſide*)—ſhall I tax her with it directly, or wait a little longer to ſee her cunning? —Let you and I go and chat a little together above ſtairs.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Ah! you look croſs. With all heart, I'll go —one, two, three, and away. [*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

The little frippery, how ſhe carries it off!——I burn, I'm in a fever: I have had the graſs cut under my feet. Oh! the young Magdalen! The ſly iniquity! Mary-Ann, come back I ſay.

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! I ſee you don't love me——

OLDCASTLE.

You are much miſtaken, draw a chair---ſit down ---Well! and how have you paſſed your time in my abſence?

MARY-ANN.

As well as any thing.

OLDCASTLE.

Have you any news?

MARY-ANN.

News!---law, not I---fikins, I fib tho'. I have news to tell you.

OLDCASTLE.

Have you? Well!

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Little kitten's dead.

OLDCASTLE.

Indeed!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! if you had ſeen all its pretty little tricks, and how it played about. It grieved me to loſe ſhe. But ſquirrel's well.

OLDCASTLE.

Is he?

MARY-ANN.

Yes, and ſo is mackaw.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! that's good news.

MARY-ANN.

Yes, and I have marked three ſhirts, and hemmed five handkerchiefs.

OLDCASTLE.

Mighty well! (*pauſes and looks at her earneſtly*) Mary Ann, this is a wide and dangerous world we live in: ſcandal, malice, and detraction are ever flying about, conſtantly on the wing, and ſpreading pernicious tales to the ruin of every character.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

You frighten a body, you talk ſo.

OLDCASTLE.

Draw near, ſweet, draw near. Some impertinent neighbours have whiſpered---but I did not believe 'em—they have ſaid, that while I was in the country, a young gentleman frequented here, and was well received, Mary Ann. But I have laid a wager there was no foundation for any ſuch idle givings out.

MARY-ANN.

How much have you laid?

OLDCASTLE.

Five pounds to four.

MARY-ANN.

All that! make a hedge of it, as you did at the horſe-race.

OLDCASTLE.

Why ſo?

MARY-ANN.

Cauſe, you'll loſe.

OLDCASTLE.

Then there was a young gentleman here?

MARY-ANN.

As ſure as a gun. He was here for ever and for ever, morning, noon, and night.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

But, my little lambkin, did not I forbid any viſits? I won't be certain, but if my memory does not fail me——

MARY-ANN.

Oh! for a matter o'that, you may be certain: you did forbid it, ſure enough.

OLDCASTLE.

And why was I diſobeyed, my dear?

MARY-ANN.

It's the ſurpriſingeſt thing in the world: I'll tell you all about it.

OLDCASTLE.

That's right; let us hear.

MARY-ANN.

I was ſitting in the balcony, thinking of no earthly thing, and he paſſed by on the other ſide of the way —Ah! he looked as handſome as an angel, and ſo he made me a low bow: I bluſhed up to my very ears, and ſo I got up, and made a low curteſy; and ſo he kiſſed his hand, and I could not help ſmiling at that, and ſo he bowed again and again, and I curteſyed again and again, and then he walked up the ſtreet, and down the ſtreet, and to and fro, and backwards and forwards; and would you believe it? He did not miſs a time making me a bow with all the good nature in the world, and ſo I was as good natured as he, and if he had ſtaid all night long, I ſhould have ſtaid

ſtaid too, for I thought it would not be right to be outdone in civility.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! thoſe damned balconies, I always hated them. Well! well! go on, Mary Ann.

MARY-ANN.

Well, and ſo the next day a large, comely fat gentlewoman came to me, and ſhe had three or four bandboxes full of fine things, and ſhe ſaid ſhe had orders to give me my choice of charming lace, and charming ribbons———

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the execrable procureſs! (*aſide*)

MARY-ANN.

You are very pretty, my dear, ſays ſhe, but it's a pity you ſhould be mewed up here. And then ſhe offered me to take me home to her own houſe, and ſaid ſhe would dizen me out with diamonds, and then a lord would fall in love with me.

OLDCASTLE.

The infernal ſorcereſs! (*aſide*)

MARY-ANN.

And then could you think of her goodneſs? Indeed I can't help loving her for it. She offered me to go and meet the young gentleman at her houſe. I thanked her, and took it very kind, but I did not care to go to ſtrange places, and ſo I ſaid the gentleman might come here if he would.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the travelling milliner! (*aside*) Well, and did he come?

MARY-ANN.

That he did ſure enough. And he ſaid the very ſight of me cured him of his wounds. Ah! I am ſure you can't blame me, for I could not let him die, ſo I could not. I almoſt cried my eyes out when little kitten died.

OLDCASTLE.

Brother Lovibond is right. Oh! I dread the reſt. (*aside*)

MARY-ANN.

Ah!—but you are angry now——

OLDCASTLE.

No, not angry. Well? how did he behave?

MARY-ANN.

Ah! he had ſuch a pretty ſmile, and he gave me this twee: and he gave Bridget and Peter whole handfuls of money.

OLDCASTLE.

What did he ſay?

MARY-ANN.

Oh! the pretticſt words in the world.

OLDCASTLE.

But he did not touch you?

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

By goles, I beg your pardon for that, but he did, though.

OLDCASTLE.

I gueſſed ſo. *(aſide)*—Go on.

MARY-ANN.

He kiſſed me a thouſand and a thouſand times.

OLDCASTLE.

Daggers! daggers! daggers! *(aſide)*

MARY-ANN.

And ſqueezed my hand ſo tenderly.

OLDCASTLE.

Poiſon! wormwood! wormwood!

MARY-ANN.

He took me round the neck.

OLDCASTLE.

I thought as much *(aſide)*——proceed.

MARY-ANN,

And round the waiſt, and he——

OLDCASTLE.

Now, now; now for the worſt.—How I tremble!

MARY-ANN.

What's the matter with you?

OLDCASTLE.

Nothing——we ſhall have ſome rain——my corn ſhoots; that's all. Did you do nothing more to cure his wounds?

MARY-ANN.

Look you there now! you are angry: ought I to have done more?

OLDCASTLE.

No; enough of all conſcience; but, are you ſure this was all?

MARY-ANN.

He gave me this fan, and a pair of ear-rings; and I am ſure it was very civil of him to ſhew ſo much good nature to a ſtranger.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary Ann, Mary Ann, all his ſmooth words, all his tenderneſs, all his ſmiles, were baits to entrap you, to enſnare you to your ruin.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but he told me to the contrary, over and over, and over again.

OLDCASTLE.

I know the world: it was all for your deſtruction. Go up to your room: all this ſhall be explained to you.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but you are out of humour with a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Do as I bid you.

MARY-ANN.

Yes, that's what I will. By goles, he's a ſweet gentleman, for all you, that's what he is. (*aſide*)

[*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE. (*alone*)

What an eſcape have I had! and yet her an ingenuous manner of confeſſing all, gives me ſome hopes. I'll read her a lecture, and then I'll go and let Sir Theodore Brumpton know what a villain his ſon is. Oh! Mary Ann, Mary Ann.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT the SECOND.

Scene LOVIBOND'S.

Enter HARRIET.

HARRIET.

HOW my heart beats! poſt haſte, gallop! gallop! and no wonder. It's a dangerous experiment I have tried. Could I but convey this letter to Mr. Belford—huſh! here comes my turn-key!

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Well Harriet, I have executed your commiſſion.

HARRIET.

How did he receive it?

LOVIBOND.

Terribly mortified, tho' I thought I marked, as he went off, an odd ſort of a dry conſtrained ſmile.

HARRIET.

But I ſhall have no more reaſon to complain of him, I hope.

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! I almoſt pitied the poor devil.

HAR-

HARRIET.

He deſerves no pity, Mr. Lovibond.

LOVIBOND.

I believe it. But he knows he was engaged in a vain purſuit; he ſaid ſo himſelf, and bid me aſſure you he would loſe no more time.

HARRIET.

That revives me.

LOVIBOND.

He will hardly come this way again.

HARRIET.

I don't know what to ſay to that. (*aſide*) I dread the contrary. I am afraid he will not renounce me ſo eaſily as you may imagine.

LOVIBOND.

And, pray, what reaſon have you for thinking ſo?

HARRIET.

I have terrible proofs againſt him. While you was out, he came again under my window.

LOVIBOND.

Ay!

HARRIET

I ran away at the ſight of him. But the window being open, he flung this little box into the room with a letter in it.

LOVIBOND.

A letter in it!

HARRIET.

Yes, the wicked contriver! a letter in it. I ran to the window to throw it to him again, but he was gone, and then it occurred to me that it might not be quite ſo prudent to throw it into the ſtreet, leſt it ſhould fall into the hands of malicious people, who might miſinterpret appearances to my diſadvantage.

LOVIBOND.

That was wiſely judged.

HARRIET.

I have been ever ſince thinking that it ought to be returned, and if I had a proper perſon———

LOVIBOND.

Who ſo proper as myſelf? Let me have it.

HARRIET.

No, no; it would affront him more if delivered by a common porter.

LOVIBOND.

Excuſe me, I am the fitteſt perſon. A letter in a box! what contrivances they have! I'll take care he ſhall have it, and he will look ſo ſilly when he perceives that all his ſchemes are baffled.

HARRIET.

Why indeed, it will aſtoniſh him the more, if you deliver it.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

So it will—ha! ha!——it will be a rare ſtroke of revenge. Ha! ha!

HARRIET. (*laughing*)

The neweſt that ever was.

LOVIBOND.

I like it of all things. But firſt let me ſee the contents of his letter.

HARRIET.

Dear heart, not for the world. Would you give the horrid man room to imagine that a girl of character would ſo much as open the ſeal of his odious letter? Let me adviſe, Mr. Lovibond; to return it unopened will be the ſtrongeſt mark of contempt, and the greateſt affront that can be put upon him.

LOVIBOND.

There is ſomething in that. Your wiſdom charms me. You endear yourſelf to me more and more every hour.

HARRIET.

Uſe your own diſcretion whether to open it or not! But the reaſons I have given——

LOVIBOND.

Are to me concluſive. I'll about this buſineſs directly. Ha! ha! we'll put the greateſt affront in the world upon him. Ha! ha! the trueſt mark of contempt, ha! ha! good-by, roſe-bud, good-by. [*Exit.*

HARRIET.

Yes, yes, let him have it unopened. If this plot takes, I ſhall have my utmoſt wiſh. And making him my go-between in the buſineſs, gives life and ſpirit to the plot. If I can out-wit him, I ſhall be happy at laſt. [*Exit.*

Scene OLDCASTLE'S *Houſe.*

Enter OLDCASTLE, *and* MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

A mortal ſin!

OLDCASTLE.

Yes, a mortal ſin! you are unexperienced in theſe matters. It is a ſin, child, to accept of preſents from men, twees, fans, and Bruſſels lace. Bruſſels lace has done as much miſchief as the forbidden fruit.---I wiſh I had bred her up a Quaker. (*aſide*) Mind my words: to indulge wanton young men in liberties with your perſon; to let 'em fold you round the waiſt, play with your neck, and print laſcivious kiſſes on your lips, is the ſure road to deſtruction.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but I don't believe that---and a pity it ſhould, for, (*ſmiling at him*) it is very agreeable. I am ſure I like it better than queſtions and commands, or hide and go ſeek, either.

OLDCASTLE.

I tell you they are all abominable things till the marriage-ceremony is performed.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

And is it allowed then?

OLDCASTLE.

Then, and then only, Mary Ann.

MARY-ANN. *(ſmiling)*

By goles, I am glad to hear that, and ſo marry me as ſoon as you will.

OLDCASTLE.

Hold, beware, Mary Ann. I marry you for myſelf only: you muſt deſpiſe and deteſt all others.

MARY-ANN.

I wiſh you would let me go and feed my birds.

OLDCASTLE.

Compoſe your thoughts, I ſay. Marriage is an holy inſtitution, and exacts rigorous duties on the part of the wife. You muſt love, honour, and obey your huſband. Be upon your guard; the enemy of woman-kind is for ever prowling about in queſt of prey, always ready to ſeduce, to murder, and devour, and ſwallow up in the jaws of ruin every frail young creature that comes in his way.

MARY-ANN. (*burſts into tears*)

But they ſhan't ſwallow me up, ſo they ſhan't.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! ay! this will do her good. Come, come, dry up your tears.

MARY-

MARY-ANN. *(ſobbing)*

I did not do any thing to be devoured in the jaws of ruin, ſo I did not.

OLDCASTLE.

No, no; all will be well. 'Tis for your good I ſpeak. So, ſo, ſo; have done crying. There—— make me a curteſy. Mighty well! be a good girl.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but they ſhan't murder, and devour me, for there are folks enough in London all hours of the day to aſſiſt a body; and if he comes in the night, I can call the watch, ſo I can.

OLDCASTLE.

I am pleaſed with her ſimplicity. This young profligate that you have let into my houſe, if he ſhould come under your window again—That's right. I have a thought: you ſhall fling him out all his preſents, you ſhall write him a letter, and tell him what a monſter he is. Come, take that chair, ſit down, take that pen, and write as I dictate to you.

MARY-ANN. *(ſitting down.)*

Law! I does not underſtand all this.

OLDCASTLE. *(walking about)*

Write as I dictate. Come, begin. Mr. Brumpton. *(goes to the ſide of the ſcene)* Peter, bring me up a candle.

MARY-ANN.

" Dear Mr. Brumpton!

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Brumpton, and no more.

MARY-ANN. (*ſmiling aſide*)

Very well.

OLDCASTLE. (*walking about*)

You are a vile man, and your viſits I now ſee ſprung from a bad deſign.

MARY-ANN. (*aſide*)

Ah! I don't like thoſe words. By goles (*ſmiling as his back is turned*) I know what I'll do—(*ſtifling a laugh*) I have writ it.

OLDCASTLE.

To ruin my future happineſs——

MARY-ANN.

Happineſs. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

Your intention is baſe, and unworthy of a gentleman.

MARY-ANN.

Very well. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

You are odious in your perſon; deteſtable in your morals, and the ſcorn of all our ſex. Have you writ it?

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

Stay, ſtay, all our ſex. (*writes*)

OLDCASTLE.

I am in love with Mr. Biddulph.

MARY-ANN.

Who?

OLDCASTLE.

Write as I bid you. I am in love with Mr. Biddulph, a worthy good gentleman; and out of his hands, it never ſhall be in your power to ſeduce me.

MARY-ANN. (*ſmiling*)

Very well.

OLDCASTLE.

Therefore let me never ſee you any more—Mary Ann Richley.

MARY-ANN. (*writes*)

Mary Ann Richley.

OLDCASTLE.

Now let me read it.

MARY-ANN.

No, no; ſtay, ſtay a moment: not quite done.

Enter

Enter PETER. (*with a candle*)

PETER.

Here be the candle, maſter. The gentleman is walking under the window now.

OLDCASTLE.

Is he? Make haſte, fold up the letter; let me do it; let me do it. Make haſte; come, come, diſpatch, he'll be gone, elſe. You ſhall throw it to him now, and all his preſents. Come, come, make haſte.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! I am ready. I like this of all things.
[*Exeunt in a violent hurry.*

Scene the Street.

Enter BELFORD, *and* LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Once more well met, Sir. You can write I fancy, can't you?

BELFORD.

The drift of that queſtion, Sir?

LOVIBOND.

I fancy you know this little bauble. (*ſhewing a box*) You don't know it to be ſure, no, nor the letter in the inſide. Here take it back. I charge nothing

thing for the poſtage. You have it unopened, in *ſtatu quo.* (*opens the box*) Look ye here; ha!—you have it in good order, and well conditioned as it came. Ha! ha!——Harriet would not read a word of it: ſhe had no curioſity about it.

BELFORD.

But I have. (*aſide, and taking the letter, opens it*) Heavens bleſs her wit. (*aſide, and reads*)

LOVIBOND.

Ay! you know the hand-writing. Take notice you broke the ſeal yourſelf. None of us read a word of it. We return it unopened, to make the affront the deeper.

BELFORD.

I believe you, Sir. I ſee you never read a word of it.

LOVIBOND.

Not a ſyllable: her pride would not ſuffer it.

BELFORD.

Well, ſince it is come to this, being out of humour will avail nothing—Ha! ha! I can't help laughing.

LOVIBOND.

That's pleaſant of you. Ha! ha! ha!

BELFORD.

Yes, very pleaſant. Ha! ha! ha!

LOVIBOND.

See what your intrigues are come to!

BELFORD.

Yes, Sir, you have brought 'em to a fine pafs.

LOVIBOND.

Ay! you fee I am not to be tricked.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

OLDCASTLE.

Mr. Lovibond, I am wild with joy.

LOVIBOND.

And fo am I.

BELFORD.

Who is that old fellow? (*afide, and reads his letter*)

OLDCASTLE.

I have managed matters charmingly. Who is that fpark?

LOVIBOND.

You need not be fhy of him. Mr. Old——

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Biddulph. (*afide*)

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Well! I fancy you will toſs no more letters in at the window.

BELFORD.

No truly, Sir, not I: and I beg you will aſſure the lady that——

LOVIBOND.

Ay! let us hear: you need not mind this gentleman. Come, come, let us hear, now brother Old——

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Biddulph. (*aſide*)

LOVIBOND.

Ay! now hear him, Mr. Biddulph.

BELFORD.

I beg the lady's pardon, Sir. I reſign myſelf to her inclinations, and ſhall obey her commands.

LOVIBOND.

Very well.

BELFORD.

You are too powerful a rival, and ſince it is ſo, you will be pleaſed to tell her I moſt heartily approve of the choice ſhe has made.

LOVIBOND.

Do you hear that? (*to* OLDCASTLE.)

BEL-

BELFORD.

Her ſuperior ſenſe ſhines forth in every action of her life, and, Sir, I have only to ſay that I ſhall never give her cauſe to complain again. You will report me to the lady, and, Sir, I take my leave. [*Exit.*

LOVIBOND.

There, there, you ſee what a happy man I am.

OLDCASTLE.

Well, and now let me tell you——

LOVIBOND.

I can't ſtay to hear: I am in the elements with joy. Brother Oldcaſtle, your ſervant. [*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

But, brother Lovibond, let me tell you—an envious man, he can't bear his neighbours happineſs. I muſt follow him and tell him all. [*Exit.*

Enter BRISK.

BRISK.

My dear good-nature hold you your tongue! you plead in vain: not a ſtep will I budge. I am rock, and will be made a dupe no more. Well ſaid my juſt reſentment: we know the world now, and will be led a devil's dance no longer. Bravo Briſk, now you are free, and your own man again. Service is a very unthankful office, and for the mere honour of ——Pſhaw! pox! now my honour muſt be heard.

What will the world ſay of you, Mr. Briſk, you that have hitherto been the firſt footman in England, renowned for your parts and your abilities! money is abſolutely neceſſary for your maſter's affairs: Mr. Oldcaſtle is his only reſource, and you have orders to apply for it directly. But, my dear honour, you know what an empty bubble you are, and how often I have been kicked in your ſervice. The more glory, man; If any body thinks it worth his while to kick you, it's a ſign you are riſing in the world. Thoſe are the things that will help your fortune, and make an exciſeman of you at laſt! bravo! I kindle at the thought. I muſt go on; one effort more, Briſk, and then——But how! how to touch the caſh!—"My Maſter is in the utmoſt diſtreſs, Sir, and will "be for ever obliged to you"——Pſhaw! that will never do—I have a ſtratagem, and if I can but meet with maſter Oldcaſtle——ha! as luck will have it—courage, Briſk! here he comes.

Enter OLDCASTLE.

BRISK.

Oh! Sir! I am glad I have met you at laſt. I have ſought you thro' the whole town.

OLDCASTLE.

You live with young Brumpton, don't you?

BRISK.

The ſame, Sir. Such a tide of affairs coming upon him! ſuch an unforeſeen accident! poor Sir Theodore, Sir! the good worthy gentleman, on his way from the country——

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

I underſtood he was in town.

BRISK.

He was coming to town, Sir; we expected him every hour. And now the fatal news is arrived. He was taken ſuddenly ill; no aſſiſtance near; it happened on the road; the poor gentleman expired, and in the moſt critical moment!

OLDCASTLE.

Carried off in this manner you ſay, and without having time to be ill!

BRISK.

Yes, Sir; without a ſingle conſultation of phyſicians! It's very hard! It's a pity he was in ſuch a haſte to die. But good ſometimes comes of evil they ſay. The news has wrought a wonderful change in my young maſter. Sir Theodore had made a match for him in the country; a great match indeed!

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! I heard of it.

BRISK.

And yet the ſon, perverſe and obſtinate, was in love here in town; that is, he fancied he was, with an inſignificant huſſey, and was determined to marry her, in oppoſition to his poor father.

OLDCASTLE.

I have heard of that too.

BRISK.

But he is now ſhocked to find that he has been a monſter of diſobedience, and he gives up all thought of this town lady.

OLDCASTLE.

That's right: the good young man!

BRISK.

He renounces her for ever, Sir, and is reſolved to go off immediately for the country, and marry no woman in the world but the perſon deſigned for him by his father.

OLDCASTLE.

The good young man! this is the beſt news I ever heard in my life. (*aſide*) The good young man!

BRISK.

But then his intention of going out of town, I fear, may be fruſtrated.

OLDCASTLE.

As how! that muſt not be.

BRISK.

Why we were kept a little bare of caſh latterly, juſt to reduce him to a ſenſe of his duty: and now he wants wherewithal to diſcharge ſome little bills, before we ſet out for the country.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Why, I am indebted to Sir Theodore's eſtate. The intentions of the young man muſt not be fruſtrated.

BRISK.

Heaven forbid!

OLDCASTLE.

Here, I have in a purſe here——Ha! ha! I ſhall get rid of a plague and a torment (*aſide*)——I can let him have a couple of hundreds——(*holds out the purſe to him*)

BRISK.

Ah! Sir! if you will be ſo generous.

OLDCASTLE.

Here, here; take it to him. and tell him he can't go out of town too ſoon.

BRISK.

I ſhall be ſure to tell him Sir. [*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

A good journey to him, ſay I. How! is not that he?

Enter BRUMPTON. (*humming a tune*)

OLDCASTLE.

Well, Mr. Brumpton—the young rogue, nothing affects him. Now will he tell me that he is going back into the country.

BRUMPTON.

Oh !—I longed to ſee you. The old curmudgeon is returned from the country.

OLDCASTLE.

Ay ! let us hear.

BRUMPTON.

The ſervants have changed their tone, and the door is ſhut in my face.

OLDCASTLE.

I can't help laughing. Ha ! ha ! this Mr. Biddulph knows what he is about, I fancy.

BRUMPTON.

Po ! the fellow is fitter to have the funeral ſervice read over him than the marriage ceremony. He made her come to the balcony,---

OLDCASTLE.

Well ! how was that ?

BRUMPTON.

He muffled himſelf up behind the curtain: She threw me out ſome trinkets, I had given her. But, my dear friend, ſhe flung a letter with 'em.

OLDCASTLE.

I long to hear about that.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

The contents of it amazed me.

OLDCASTLE.

I dare ſay: ſhe told you her mind, I reckon.

BRUMPTON.

Moſt freely, moſt openly. Old Noſtrodamus is outwitted. For, look you here, here in her own fair hand—ten thouſand bleſſings on her (*kiſſes the letter*) Here, Sir, the genuine dictates of her heart.

OLDCASTLE.

He is mad, ſure! let me hear it.

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

" Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are a charming man,
" and your civilities, I am ſure, ſprung from an ho-
" neſt deſign, for my future happineſs.

OLDCASTLE.

In the name of wonder, what is all this! (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

" Your intentions are generous and worthy of a
" gentleman.

OLDCASTLE.

The little ſorcereſs! (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

" You are handſome in your perſon, and your
" manners alſo; and the admiration of all our ſex.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the Jezebel! (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

" I hate Mr. Biddulph, an odious old wretch; " and——

OLDCASTLE.

The vile harlotry! (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON. (*reads*)

" And out of my guardian's hands, it is in your " power to relieve me. Yours indeed, and indeed, " until death us do part—Mary Ann Richley."

OLDCASTLE.

She has reverſed [illegible] of it!

BRUMPTON.

There's an adventure! ha! ha! ha;——Is not ſhe a charming girl? You don't partake of my joy.

OLDCASTLE.

Partake of your joy—I—I—I—yes.

[*looking un-eaſy*

BRUMPTON.

What a way old Biddulph will be in!

OLDCASTLE.

Why, I muſt ſay I feel for him.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Feel for him, a baſe betrayer of his truſt! who could offer his withered, ſuperannuated love to the ſweeteſt girl, and with the winter of old age nip ſo much beauty in its bud! January and May joined together! does not that make you laugh?

OLDCASTLE.

I am afraid of laughing, tho' I love it of all things. It ſets me a coughing. Well! but trouble may come of all this.

BRUMPTON.

Never be uneaſy. An't you amazed at my ſucceſs?

OLDCASTLE.

I am indeed. I never was ſo confounded in all my days *(aſide)* I wiſh as heartily as a miniſter of ſtate that there was not ſuch a thing as pen, ink, and paper in the kingdom. (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON.

What's the matter with you?

OLDCASTLE.

A megrim has ſuddenly taken me. Take care what you do. I thought you were going into the country. I have let your man Briſk have two hundred for your uſe.

BRUMPTON.

Have you? Nobly done! that will help me to carry

carry her off. You have furniſhed me with the ſinews of war.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the vile baggage! I am undone; I am ruined. I muſt run home directly. [*Exit.*

BRUMPTON.

What's the matter with the old curmudgeon?

Enter BELFORD.

BRUMPTOR.

Belford, let me embrace you. I tread in air. (*embracing him.*)

BELFORD.

My dear Brumpton, I too am wild with joy. I am out of my ſenſes—(*walks about humming a tune*)

BRUMPTON. (*hums a different tune*)

Oh! ſuch an unexpected, tranſporting, raviſhing event!

BELFORD.

Such a ſurprize, above all romance!

BRUMPTON.

Oh! Belford, I am the happieſt rogue.

BELFORD.

Such unutterable bliſs, my dear boy——

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Her wit is equal so her beauty.

BELFORD.

The greateſt ſtroke of invention,—Ha! ha!

BRUMPTON.

Such a ſweet epiſtle!

BELFORD.

So divine a letter! and the old fellow brought it himſelf.

BRUMPTON.

No, no; you miſtake; ſhe flung it out of the window.

BELFORD.

Po!—I tell you he was the bearer of it himſelf.

BRUMPTON.

You are quite wrong; ſhe was in the balcony, and——

BELFORD.

Pſhaw! give me leave to know. Did not I ſee him?

BRUMPTON.

There was no ſeeing him diſtinctly. He was ſkulking behind the curtain, and then ſhe threw the letter

letter down to me. The idol of my heart!—the lovely Mary Ann!

BELFORD.

Mary-Ann! 'ſdeath! I was telling you how my ſweet godeeſs contrived to ſend me a letter by her very guardian.

BRUMPTON.

I did not hear a ſyllable of that matter. I was telling you ——

BELFORD.

Then I'll tell you how it was.

BRUMPTON.

[illegible] the ſtory of my happineſs.

BELFORD.

Nay, nay; mine is the moſt ſurprizing.

BRUMPTON.

Look ye here, my boy *(ſhewing a letter)* the work of her own fingers!

BELFORD.

There, there—*(ſhewing his letter)* more eloquence than in all Cicero.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON. *(reads)*

Dear Mr. Brumpton, you are a ſweet man, and your civilities——

BELFORD. *(reads)*

You will be ſurprized at this letter; and more ſo at the manner of conveying it.

BRUMPTON. *(reads)*

The admiration of all our ſex.

BELFORD. *(reads)*

But I muſt hazard all, or fall a ſacrifice to the avarice of my guardian.

(Each interrupting the other, and reading at the ſame time very eagerly.)

BRUMPTON. *(reads)*

And out of his hands it is in your power to relieve me.

BELFORD. *(reads)*

I love you, Mr. Belford; will you deſpiſe me for telling you ſo? I hope not.

BRUMPTON. *(reads)*

Yours indeed, and indeed, until death us do part, Mary-Ann Richley.

BELFORD. *(reads)*

Contrive ſome means for my eſcape, and heaven and earth combined ſhall not keep you from me—the diſconſolate Harriet.

[*Exeunt together.*

SCENE

SCENE Oldcastle's *Houſe.*

Enter Peter *and* Bridget.

Peter.

It's pure lucky, Bridget, he did not find the gentleman in the cloſet.

Bridget.

He lay cloſe all the time like a mouſe in a cheeſe, and maſter walked about the room, and gnawed his lip, and gnaſhed his teeth, and gave the table a hugeous rap with his ſtick, and fetched a deep groan, and did not ſay ſo much as one word, and then led Miſs Mary Ann out of the room.

Peter.

I'll tell you what, Bridget, it's all owing to his finding out the young gentleman's viſits here to Miſs Mary Ann.

Bridget.

Yes, yes; it ſtands to reaſon how it muſt be that. Dear me! he locks poor Miſs Mary-Ann up here for all the world like a horſe in a pound, and I can't tell why or by reaſon whereof, not I.

Peter.

I'll tell you, Bridget. I underſtands theſe matters. He locks her up do you ſee, becauſe as why he is troubled with jealouſy.

Brid-

BRIDGET.

What is jealouſy pray, Peter?

PETER.

Dear heart, you are ſuch another. Jealouſy, you may know, won't let a body ſleep. It's for all the world like ſo many rats behind the wainſcot. I'll tell you now, by way of likeneſs. The gentleman you know gaved you a guinea. Now putting caſe, any body was to come for to take away your guinea, do you ſee, that would put you in a paſſion, would not it?

BRIDGET.

Oh! I underſtands it now.

PETER.

It's as like it as any thing. For ſee but here: Miſs Mary-Ann is his guinea; and you know when a body wants to be fingering another man's money, what does he do then?—Why he brings you down to ſizes an whole heap of London counſel, to quarrel about it, and abuſe one another, and be together by the ears for ever ſo many hours.

BRIDGET.

I remember all that, and it's as like Miſs Mary-Ann as it can ſtare. But then I want to know why does not every body make the ſame fuſs, and lock his wife up too?

PETER.

Po! you fool! that's becauſe every body does not love his wife as well as a guinea.

BRID-

BRIDGET.

Then I underſtands the whole git of it. But law look ye there!

PETER.

It's maſter, as ſure as a gun. How he looks, Bridget! let us get out of his way. [*Exeunt.*

Enter OLDCASTLE.

OLDCASTLE.

What a trick ſhe has played me! Oh! the little treacherous——

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

Law! you look ſo ſtrange, you are enough to frighten a body.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary-Ann, I have ſeen Mr. Brumpton.

MARY-ANN.

Have you? *(laughs aſide)*

OLDCASTLE.

He was wonderfully pleaſed with your letter.

MARY-ANN. *(ſmiling aſide)*

By goles, I know why.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

What did you ſay to him?

MARY-ANN.

Say to him! (*turns away, and ſmiles*

OLDCASTLE.

Did you write what I bid you?

MARY-ANN. (*laughing*)

Altered it a little bit!

OLDCASTLE.

A good deal, I fancy.

MARY-ANN. (*laughs*)

By gingo, I played you that trick.

OLDCASTLE.

And was not it baſe to deceive me?

MARY-ANN.

I could not find it in my heart to ſay the things you wanted me to write.

OLDCASTLE.

And don't you conſider what a crime it is?

MARY-ANN.

It was only to play upon you.

OLDCASTLE.

Such a wicked letter, Mary Ann!

MARY-ANN.

It was you ſhewed me the way. How ſhould I have thought of ſuch a thing?

OLDCASTLE.

That ſtings, that galls—(*aſide*) But there are women, Mary Ann, who can write without being bid.

MARY-ANN.

What, all out of their own heads!

OLDCASTLE.

Even ſo.

MARY-ANN.

And what do they write?

OLDCASTLE.

They make aſſignations; inform their gallants, when their huſbands are to be from home; they fix the time for amorous meetings, at routs and drums——

MARY-ANN.

Routs and drums! what be they?

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Wicked aſſemblies!—where women loſe more than they can pay, and then pawn their perſons, together with the huſband's honour, and ſo infamouſly pay off the debts they have contracted.

MARY-ANN. (*ſmiling*)

That's comical enough.

OLDCASTLE.

And then they fly wild about this town; to the ſeducing gaieties of Vaux-hall and Ranelagh.

MARY-ANN.

Law! I never heard of they.

OLDCASTLE.

Ranelagh, child, is a wicked round of ſin, intrigue, and clandeſtine love; where crowds gather together, ſtealing glances, exchanging letters, negotiating riotous pleaſures. Vaux-hall is a very Paradiſe of forbidden fruits, where ſhady walks exclude the conſcious day, and every blandiſhment of ſenſe, muſick, wine, and opportunity, conſpire to waken the voluptuous paſſions.

MARY-ANN. (*ſmiling*)

And muſt not Mary-Ann ſee thoſe places?

OLDCASTLE.

No, never, never, Mary Ann. Here, here is the marriage-act for you to read. All young girls ought to have it by heart. This will teach you how

unnatural it is to fall in love without the conſent of King, Lords, and Commons!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but I can't ſtay for their leave. They are too great folks for me to think of!

OLDCASTLE.

Take it up-ſtairs with you. It is a very edifying tract!

MARY-ANN.

Very well, I'll go—(*as ſhe is going*) I'll go and try if I can't write a letter out of my own head.

[*Exit.*

OLDCASTLE.

When ſhe has read the marriage act, ſhe will have a proper ſenſe of her duty. So, Peter!—ſo, Bridget!——walk in.

Enter PETER *and* BRIDGET.

OLDCASTLE.

Now if I can tutor theſe to my mind. (*aſide*)

BRIDGET.

For the love of mercy, Sir.

PETER.

I'll never do ſo any more, maſter.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Come hither both. I am not angry: you are no ſtrangers to the affection I bear Mary-Ann.

BRIDGET.

No, that's for ſure: you love her as well as you do a guinea.

OLDCASTLE.

How now, Malapert!

BRIDGET.

I am ſure Peter ſaid ſo.

PETER.

No, not I, for the varſal world!

OLDCASTLE.

What's the matter, Numſkulls? Liſten to me. Watch my houſe well; and be ſure you never let any powdered coxcombs put a foot over the threſhold of my door.

BRIDGET.

Yes, Sir!

PETER.

No, Sir!

OLDCASTLE.

But the wily arts of young men! Think of a gay embroidered fop coming to you with a piteous

look: "I languiſh for your miſtreſs; I die in her abſence; let me but ſee her, or elſe I have one foot in my grave already."

PETER.

Be gone about your buſineſs, fellow, ſays I. This is no place for you. My young miſtreſs deſires no ſuch trumpery.

OLDCASTLE.

Mighty well, Peter, it can't be better. But you, Mrs. Bridget, will take ſome compaſſion upon a poor dying ſwain.

BRIDGET.

Go farther a field, and ſet up the ſign of the Horns ſomewhere elſe, do: no admittance for you here.

OLDCASTLE.

Charming, Bridget, charming! you do it wonderfully. But then, ſays he "I'll lie down in the ſtreet, and there breathe my laſt.

PETER.

And then I run up to the garret-window, and ſouce a bucket of water on his head.

OLDCASTLE.

Excellent! excellent! it will cool his paſſion for him. Have a bucket of water always ready. Ha! ha! I ſhould laugh to ſee him ſtreaming like a river-god in the ſtreet. I am delighted with you both. But then he comes with his damned bewitching gold. Here, Peter, to drink my health: here Mrs. Bridget, to buy you ſome tea.

PETER.

PETER.

We want none of your droſs.

BRIDGET.

No, not we. *(puſhing Oldcaſtle)*

PETER.

Go about your buſineſs, I ſay.

BRIDGET.

Money is the root of all evil.

Both ſhoving him.

OLDCASTLE.

As I could wiſh. That's right; never ſpare me. But here, ſays he, here's the money for you. [*holding out money.*

PETER.

I humbly thank your honour. *(takes it.)*

OLDCASTLE.

Villain! traitor! *(ſtrikes him)* Is this your virtue at laſt?

PETER.

Law! what's the matter? Was not I to take it?

OLDCASTLE.

What have I been labouring all this time?

PETER.

But you did not ſhew the money at firſt. I could

have refuſed it ever ſo long, if I had not ſeen the colour of it.

OLDCASTLE.

The way of the world! but you are never to take it. Money is the ruin of the world. It declares war, it patches up a peace, it makes lawyers ſpeak, it makes ſome folks hold their tongues. Go, and think of all this.

BRIDGET *and* PETER. *(going in an hurry)*
Yes, Sir!

OLDCASTLE.

And remember you have no buſineſs with money, ——Come, and ſhut the ſtreet-door after me.

BOTH.

Yes, Sir.

OLDCASTLE.

Be ſure you never touch a ſhilling. This Mr. Brumpton will be the death of me. [*Exeunt.*

End of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT the THIRD.

SCENE *the Street.*

Enter OLDCASTLE *and* LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

BROTHER Lovibond! I go on as I could wiſh: my family is all as exact as clock-work.

LOVIBOND.

I am glad of it, for the laſt time I met you——

OLDCASTLE.

Ay, there was ſomething amiſs; but now, I am completely happy.

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

My dear old friend, I am glad I have met you. Oh! ſuch plague! ſuch vexation!

OLDCASTLE.

Mind him, brother Lovibond: you'll ſee what order my family is in. (*aſide*)

BRUMPTON.

I was at the houſe but a little while ſince, and—

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

And no admittance?

BRUMPTON.

Oh! the vileſt adventure!

OLDCASTLE.

A bucket of water upon your head, I reckon?

BRUMPTON.

Not ſo bad as that. I got over the garden wall, and——the adventure is whimſical too——the ſervants immediately conducted me up ſtairs.

OLDCASTLE.

Conducted you up ſtairs!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha!——mind him, brother Biddul——

OLDCASTLE. (*aſide to Lovibond*)

Call me Oldcaſtle.

BRUMPTON.

But, pox take it! my uſual good fortune failed me. I was not in the room two minutes when old Stiff-rump came tottering up: no way for a retreat. I was obliged to ſkulk in a dark nook, where I was almoſt ſtifled. In he came, and the lovely angel immediately accoſted him in ſuch a tone of ſimplicity!

LOVIBOND.

Simplicity! ay, ay; let us hear.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

The curmudgeon did not utter a ſyllable: he walked about the room, fetched a deep groan, banged the table with his cane, took her by the arm, and led her away with him.

LOVIBOND.

A narrow eſcape, brother Biddulph.

OLDCASTLE.

Call me Oldcaſtle, I ſay. *(aſide)*

LOVIBOND.

Simplicity is an admirable preſervative of young girls. Well, young gentleman, and how did all this end?

BRUMPTON.

His back was no ſooner turned, than I ſtole down ſtairs, tipt the ſervant a couple of guineas, and ſo got clear off.

LOVIBOND.

The old gentleman is going on delightfully. His family is all like clock-work! Brother Biddulph, your's. [*Exit.*

BRUMPTON.

Biddulph! what are you Mr. Biddulph all this time?

OLDCASTLE.

You ſee what plague and vexation you was bringing up on your old friend.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

My dear Sir, why did not you tell me at firſt? If I had known that I was all this time treſpaſſing upon your ground——

OLDCASTLE.

You ſee what a ſcene of iniquity you have been engaged in! But ſince you perceive your error, I am pacified. I'll tell you; you ſhall come and explain your miſtake to Mary-Ann this moment.

BRUMPTON.

With the utmoſt pleaſure, Sir, and wiſhing her all happineſs, I will bid her farewell for ever.

OLDCASTLE.

That will be right. You ſhall tell her that you repent, that you now renounce all wicked projects, and are convinced it would be the ruin of her to marry you.

BRUMPTON.

Lead the way, Sir; I am ready to obey your commands.

OLDCASTLE.

Very well! enough ſaid. *(going)*

BRUMPTON.

One dear interview!—Bravo! Brumpton! you're in luck. *(aſide)*

OLDCASTLE. *(turning about)*

What do you ſay?

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

Only that I am glad of this diſcovery.

OLDCASTLE.

Very well; come along. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *the Houſe.*

Enter MARY-ANN.

MARY-ANN.

By goles this is pure. I ſaw him at the window: he is bringing him to ſee me. I have writ another letter ſince he has taught me that trick himſelf; and now I'll give it him if I can.

Enter OLDCASTLE *and* BRUMPTON.

OLDCASTLE.

Mary-Ann, I have brought the gentleman with me. He comes to aſk your pardon, and to tell you that he was going to be the ruin of you. Tell it to her yourſelf, Mr. Brumpton.

MARY-ANN.

I am ſure I forgive him with all my heart, ſo I do.

OLDCASTLE.

Speak to her, Mr. Brumpton, ſpeak to her.

BRUMPTON.

Madam, I did not know what liberties I was taking with my friend.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

You had a mind to ruin her, ſay ſo without mincing it.

BRUMPTON.

I muſt now renounce all farther pretenſions; ſince to adore you any longer would be a violation of friendſhip, and an injury to this worthy gentleman, who has been an intimate with my father for fifty years.

OLDCASTLE.

You may paſs that by.

BRUMPTON.

So that I moſt humbly beg your pardon.

OLDCASTLE.

Go on, go on—(*he is ſeized with a fit of coughing*)

BRUMPTON. (*while Oldcaſtle coughs*)

And though I ſhall never efface your loved idea from my mind—(*he kiſſes his hand to her*)

MARY-ANN. (*ſhe ſmiles*)

You have my pardon: I told you ſo already.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Lord! Lord! (*recovering himſelf*) Well, have you told her you have done with her for ever?

BRUMPTON.

Yes, I have got ſo far.

OLD-

OLDCASTLE.

Very well! Now, Mary-Ann, on your part, let him know your mind.

MARY-ANN.

Muſt I ſay all out of my own head?

OLDCASTLE.

Ay! ay! tell him all. I wiſh brother Lovibond was witneſs to this! *(aſide)*

MARY-ANN.

I am very glad you came to ſpeak to me, Sir, and I underſtand you very well. *(ſmiles to him)*

OLDCASTLE.

But a little more at large: tell him whom you chuſe for an huſband.

MARY-ANN.

Why, here are two lovers, for whom I have very different ſentiments. I love one of them,---*(frowning at Oldcaſtle)* and *(ſmiling at Brumpton)* I hate the other. The company of one is always agreeable, *(to Oldcaſtle ſullenly)* and *(ſmiling at Brumpton)* I don't care if I never ſee the other's face. I ſhould like to be married to one of them, *(to Oldcaſtle)* and *(ſmiling at Brumpton)* I had as ſoon be gibbetted, as be married to the other. But my own Mr. Oldcaſtle ---*(toys and plays with him, then turning to Brumpton)* I love you of all things.

OLDCASTLE.

You have won my heart.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

But do you forgive I every thing now? Ah! you don't love me. (*ſings* "Go, naughty man," *and reaches a letter to Brumpton*)

OLDCASTLE.

I do; in troth I do. Mr. Brumpton, you ſee I have not ſuggeſted a word: all the dictates of her own heart.

MARY-ANN. (*ſmiling to Brumpton*)

All from the very bottom of my heart!

BRUMPTON.

Since I underſtand you, Ma'am, I ſhall remove the hated object from your ſight.

MARY-ANN.

The ſooner the better.

(*then turns and plays with Oldcaſtle*)

BRUMPTON.

Mr. Oldcaſtle, I have the honour, Sir, to wiſh you all happineſs. I fly this moment to put your commands in execution, Ma'am. (*going*)

MARY-ANN.

You can't go about it too faſt.

BRUMPTON.

You may rely upon my honour.

MARY-

MARY-ANN.

And don't let me be unhappy any more.

BRUMPTON.

You may depend upon me.

OLDCASTLE.

So, ſo; now I'll attend you down ſtairs. Po! no ceremony. You have made me happy, Mr. Brumpton. You have made Mary-Ann happy. Come I'll let you out, Mr. Brumpton. [*Exit.*

BRUMPTON. (*kiſſing his hand to* Mary Ann)

I attend you, Sir. [*Exit.*

MARY ANN.

By goles, he has taught me a little wit himſelf; and if Mr. Brumpton follows my directions, I ſhall be pure and happy at laſt.

SCENE LOVIBOND'S HOUSE.

Enter HARRIET *and* BELLFORD.

HARRIET.

I don't know what to ſay, Mr. Bellford; my heart begins to fail.

BELLFORD.

But after ſurmounting every difficulty, now in this laſt ſtage of the buſineſs to let your ſpirits ſink, would be ſuch a falling off from the character you have ſupported this day! a character that ſurpaſſes

all the heroines in romance, both for ſpirit and contrivance.

HARRIET.

The difficulties I had to encounter rouzed my ſpirits for a while, juſt as fits give us for the time more than our natural ſtrength: but now the conflict's over, my reſolution ſtaggers, and I am at full leiſure to feel the weakneſs of my condition. I can't go through it, Mr. Bellford, I can't indeed.

BELFORD.

Nay, ſummon up your reſolution. Our mutual vows, the happineſs that waits us, every motive, a thouſand things conſpire, and call for all the conſtancy you are miſtreſs of.

HARRIET.

But then to break through all the proprieties of conduct; all the decencies which my ſex requires!

BELFORD.

In a caſe like your's, the means are juſt which ſave you from deſtruction.

HARRIET. (*hears Lovibond coming*)

Deliver me! what ſhall I do? Undone! detected!

BELFORD.

This is the conſequence of delaying too long.

HARRIET.

Run into this room; make haſte; diſpatch, (*ſhuts him*

him in) and to make safe work—(*puts the key in her pocket*)

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

Harriet, I am never happy but in your company. The minutes move with leaden feet, when I am not in your presence.

HARRIET.

And yet, you ill-natured man! you can contrive to be out more than half the day.

LOVIBOND.

Chide me not; you'll break my heart if you do. every frown on that face is a death warrant, and every smile is benefit of clergy. Come, come, brighten up into happinness and love.

HARRIET.

You know your power over me. You can do what you please with your own Harriet!

LOVIBOND.

Can I?

HARRIET.

Where have you been all this time?

LOVIBOND.

I have been——but you look pale; what is the matter?

HARRIET.

Occaſioned by fretting at your abſence. And that hideous man keeps me in a conſtant alarm.

LOVIBOND.

Don't waſte a thought on him. He will trouble you no more. Tho', to do him juſtice, I believe his intentions were honourable. Poor devil! ha! I fancy he loves you dearly. Well! but poor brother Oldcaſtle! your ſiſter has ſo bamboozled him.

HARRIET.

My ſiſter!

LOVIBOND.

She has admitted a young gentleman to viſit her.

HARRIET.

She could not be ſo wicked!

LOVIBOND.

The girl has not erred ſo much from an evil diſpoſition, as from ignorance. One Mr. Brumton—a wild, fiery young ſpark——he was in the very houſe with her, and ſhe hid him in the cloſet.

HARRIET.

In the cloſet! well! after that, I will never own her for my ſiſter! the wicked girl! I am glad I I have not viſited her.

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! ha! poor man! he never ſuſpected any thing

thing. Had it been my caſe, I ſhould have ſmoked it in a moment.

HARRIET.

Without doubt! there is no impoſing upon you.

LOVIBOND.

Oh! no, no ſuch thing: the eye of an eagle for a plot! But come; it begins to grow late. Come, let me hand you to your chamber, and then I'll lock you in ſafe from all harm till morning.

HARRIET.

Heavens! what ſhall I do now? (*aſide*) Huſh let me ſay a word to you firſt. Don't ſpeak loud. My ſiſter is indeed much worſe than you can conceive. I wiſh you would ſtep and bring Mr. Oldcaſtle hither directly.

LOVIBOND.

Now! what occaſion can there be———

HARRIET.

She loves that Mr. Brumpton to diſtraction, and has actually made her eſcape, to follow the vile man.

LOVIBOND.

Made her eſcape!

HARRIET.

She is in that room now. I have locked her in. Such wicked ſchemes as ſhe has in her head! She has told me all, and intends to marry this Mr.

Brumpton: ſhe has found out that ſhe is of age, and ſays ſhe will be made a fool of no longer! there is a ſpirit for you!

LOVIBOND.

A ſpirit indeed!

HARRIET.

But I have ſecured her, to prevent the diſgrace.

LOVIBOND.

That was conſiderate of you. Let me go and talk to the young vixen.

HARRIET.

No, no; that will ſpoil all. I have pretended to connive at all this: but the moſt prudent ſtep,—I have learned all my prudence, you know, from you——

LOVIBOND.

An apt ſcholar you have been!

HARRIET.

You are very good: but there is no time to be loſt. I would have you bring Mr. Oldcaſtle here directly, that he may find her in the very fact.

LOVIBOND.

Very good! and then I ſhall be able to do the poor man a ſervice, and make a jeſt of him in to the bargain. Keep her ſafe; don't let her out; this will ſo torment him! ha! ha! [*Exit.*

HAR-

HARRIET.

I am glad my ſiſter has found a lover, and I hope ſhe'll marry him with all my heart. Is he gone? (*liſtens at the door.*) Ay! I hear him lock the ſtreet-door after him. And now I'll venture to unlock this door.

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD.

Thou charming contriver!

HARRIET.

Oh! this new danger has given freſh vigour to my ſpirits.

BELFORD.

And now, my angel, we'll make ſure of our happineſs. Come, truſt yourſelf to my care.

HARRIET.

And yet———

BELFORD.

Nay,—no more doubts: Our paſſage to the next houſe is without difficulty, and then liberty is ours.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *the Street.*

Enter LOVIBOND.

LOVIBOND.

I never was better pleaſed in all my life. I burn

with impatience to ſee him. Ha! ha! I ſhall never be able to walk faſt enough. Ha! ha! ha!

Enter OLDCASTLE.

LOVIBOND.

Well met! I wanted to ſee you.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! I am now the happieſt man on earth. My troubles with young Brumpton are all at an end, and Mary Ann is ſafe at home,

LOVIBOND.

Ay! as he thinks poor man! ha! ha! (*aſide*)

OLDCASTLE.

You may laugh, but I ſhall like to ſee your plan ſucceed as well. What a dupe you will prove at laſt!

LOVIBOND.

What a dupe you are now! the bird is flown, man; Mary Ann has eloped.

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! ha! you make me laugh.

LOVIBOND.

How ſecure he is! ha! ha! he little dreams— I tell you ſhe is gone.

OLDCASTLE.

Allways abſurd! (*going out*)

LOVI-

LOVIBOND. (*following him.*)
You are ruined, I tell you.

OLDCASTLE.
Ha! ha!——do you think I don't know better?
[*Exeunt.*

Enter HARRIET *and* BELFORD.

BELFORD.
Don't alarm yourſelf, my angel: This is my houſe. [*knocks at the door.*

HARRIET.
Oh! I ſhall certainly faint.

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.
My dear Bellford!

HARRIET.
Heavens! what's the matter?

BRUMPTON.
Don't be frightened, Ma'am.

BELFORD.
No: this is a friend of mine. Well! Brumpton, the buſineſs!

BRUMPTON.
My deareſt Belford, this is the moſt critical moment

ment of my life. I have bribed the ſervants; carried her off; ſhe is mine; mine for ever. Will you give me a room in your houſe for this one night?

BELFORD.

Why this ceremony? you know you may command in my houſe.

Re-enter OLDCASTLE *and* LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

What noiſe is that?

LOVIBOND.

That's Brumpton, I know his voice.

HARRIET.

I am frightened to death.

BRUMPTON.

The door opens, walk in ma'am, walk in.

(*Harriet goes in.*)

OLDCASTLE.

Huſh! Let us hear him.

BRUMPTON.

I am wild with love, with rapture, and ſucceſs! I have carried her fairly off, in triumph, my dear boy! She was locked up in a cloſet, but I broke open the door.

BEL-

BELFORD.

I give you joy. But my own happineſs calls. Bring the lady as ſoon as you will. [*Exit.*

BRUMPTON.

A thouſand thanks, my dear Bellford. Victoria! the prize is mine. [*Exit.*

LOVIBOND.

Are you convinced now?

OLDCASTLE.

I am thunderſtruck. Robbery! Murder! I'll break open the door. Watchman, call a juſtice of peace. I'll alarm the world! (*raps at the door*) Robbery! ſhipwreck! deſtruction! ruin!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! he feels it now, and I am not ſorry for him.

OLDCASTLE.

I am mad, I ſhall go diſtracted; I ſhall end my days in Bedlam. (*Enter a ſervant.*) I would fain ſpeak a word here in the houſe.

SERVANT.

Sir, my maſter is ſomewhat buſy, and—

OLDCASTLE.

I am plundered. I muſt go in. Oh! villain! villain! (*ruſhes in*)

LOVI-

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! Now will he ſee which can train up a young girl beſt. [*Exit.*

SCENE *an Apartment in* BELFORD'S *Houſe.*

Enter BELFORD.

BELFORD. (*liſtens at the door*)

Ay! I hear his voice. How could my booby let him in? But I have lodged her ſafe, and this ſword ſhall maintain poſſeſſion.

Enter OLDCASTLE *and* LOVIBOND.

OLDCASTLE.

Where is ſhe? Where is the unfortunate? Reſtore her directly, reſtore her to her two guardians. We come to demand her of you.

LOVIBOND.

Yes, we demand her, Sir.

BELFORD.

My houſe is my caſtle, gentlemen, and nobody muſt offer violence here.

OLDCASTLE.

I'll ſearch your houſe. I claim her, I demand her; and I will have her.

LOVIBOND.

We are her guardians, Sir, both her guardians.

BEL-

BELFORD.

Mr. Lovibond, you are her guardian; and what then, Sir? Both of ye ſcandalous betrayers of your truſt! I know it all; each circumſtance. You would impoſe upon her tender years, that you may infamouſly plunder that property which was confided to your care!

LOVIBOND.

There is a cloud gathering!——We ſhall both be brought to a ſtrict account. I had better make up this matter, that I may enjoy my own Harriet in ſecurity. Better make the beſt of a bad bargain. (*aſide*) But let me underſtand you, Mr. Bellford; do you intend to marry her yourſelf?

BELFORD.

It is my peremptory reſolution. Marriage articles, for the purpoſe of ſettling her whole fortune upon herſelf, are now drawing in the next room.

LOVIBOND.

I ſee what courſe I muſt take. If he marries her, I ſhall live in peace (*aſide*)—Mr. Oldcaſtle, the girl is of full age. Let me ſay a word in your ear. (*aſide to him*)—Conſent to the marriage, and get a handſome allowance for the trouble and expence of her education: that word makes me laugh—ha! ha! ha!

OLDCASTLE.

I am diſtracted; what ſhall I do? (*aſide*)——I thought young Brumpton was to marry her?

BEL-

BELFORD.

No Brumpton on earth ſhall rob me of her!

LOVIBOND.

Think no more of her: ſhe is not worthy of your regard. Mr. Bellford will behave like a gentleman in matters of acount, and——

BELFORD.

Preſcribe your terms. I am ready to agree the matter this moment.

OLDCASTLE.

A releaſe for the intereſt of rents and profits, a cool five thouſand for extraordinary trouble.

BELFORD.

Agreed!

LOVIBOND.

Cloſe with him; cloſe with him directly.

BELFORD.

My lawyer is in the next room; let him draw up a memorandum between us, and your conditions are granted.

LOVIBOND.

It ſhall be done. We will both ſign: come, don't heſitate. [*to Oldcaſtle.*

OLDCASTLE.

I ſhall break my heart!

LOVI-

LOVIBOND.

Po!—no hesitating. Come and finish the business!

OLDCASTLE.

It is a terrible stroke!

LOVIBOND.

Never stand debating. You have made the best of a bad bargain: lose no time. [*Forcing him along.*

OLDCASTLE.

But, Mr. Bellford——

LOVIBOND.

We must resign her. We must give her up. Come along, man. [*Forces him out.*

BELFORD.

I attend you, gentlemen. I agree to your proposals.

Enter BRUMPTON *and* MARY-ANN.

BRUMPTON.

This way, my angel: we are safe here.

BELFORD.

Brumpton! I give you joy: I give you joy, Ma'am.

MARY-ANN.

I thank you kindly, Sir.

BRUMP-

BRUMPTON.

And now, Bellford, through the perils of this day——

BELFORD.

Hold, hold! they are not quite over. Here is a deed to be ſigned: when that is finiſhed, my happineſs is then complete. Excuſe me for a moment.

[*Exit.*

BRUMPTON.

Succeſs attend you. Well, Briſk!

Enter BRISK.

BRISK.

I have got every thing clear off, Sir.

BRUMPTON.

I ſhall reward your ſervice: ſtay here and take care of this lady, while I diſpatch an affair, that admits of no delay. [*Exit.*

MARY-ANN.

Law! what a pretty room here is!

BRISK.

Your appearance tells me, that my maſter has found a treaſure.

MARY-ANN.

I am ſure I am fortunate in finding him; for I lead ſuch a life; you can't think how diſmal!

BRISK.

BRISK.

The ſcene will now be changed, and the pleaſures of life will court you on every ſide.

Enter OLDCASTLE. (*liſtening*)

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the little compound of treachery and fraud!

MARY-ANN.

I was kept from morning to night mewed up at home, and he talked ſuch a parcel of bugbears to frighten a body!

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! the traitreſs!

MARY-ANN.

And he ſaid if I looked at a ſweet ſmiling young gentleman, that I ſhould be murdered, and devoured and ſwallowed up.

BRISK.

An old blockhead!

MARY-ANN.

Yes, I thought as much. But I am ſure I am obliged to Peter and Bridget for letting me out, and they ſhall come and live with me, ſo they ſhall. Do you know our Peter and Bridget?

OLDCASTLE.

They ſhall both be hanged. [*aſide.*

MARY-ANN.

And my old guardian wanted to marry me himſelf, but—(*laughs*) He talked in ſuch a manner, and ſaid ſuch ſtrange things! (*laughs*) The joke was, he taught me how to write letters, and I ſhould never have thought of ſuch a thing, had he not put me in the head on't. And he is ſo old, and totters about ſo; and he calls me his lambkin; and bids me read the marriage act, and a heap of trumpery. An hideous, ugly, old ſcare crow! La! there he is.

OLDCASTLE. (*coming forward*)

Thou ſerpent, whom I have warmed and cheriſhed in my boſom! you muſt ſting your benefactor at laſt, muſt you? Did not I promiſe to marry you?

MARY-ANN.

Yes, but, by goles, I thank you for that though.

OLDCASTLE.

Sirrah! villain! get you out of the room. (*Exit Briſk*) And will you deſert me for a ſtranger?

MARY-ANN. (*ſhe laughs*)

He's a ſweet man!

OLDCASTLE.

Viper! this is your ſimplicity, is it? I, who loved you ſo.

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but his love is more agreeable by half.

Enter

Enter LOVIBOND *and* BELLFORD.

LOVIBOND.

Well! now every thing is ſettled. The deeds are ſigned. So, madam, you are here, are you? Brother Oldcaſtle, I always told you how this would end. Ha! ha! ha!

OLDCASTLE.

If ſhe had minded my inſtructions—

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! Inſtructions! You brought it all upon yourſelf. But 'tis better as it is: your head would have ached all the reſt of your days. Ha! ha! ha! I am heartily glad of this. Ha! ha! come, Mr. Bellford, I'll give her away. Here, take your wife.

OLDCASTLE.

Wounds! I can't ſtand this. I'll not be a witneſs. [*goes out.*

LOVIBOND.

But you ſhall be a witneſs. You are a party concerned. You muſt come back. [*Exit after him.*

BELLFORD.

Since they have agreed the matter, Harriet ſhall make her appearance. [*Exit.*

MARY-ANN. (*alone*)

What does all this mean! Sure it can't be ſiſter Harriet he talks of.

LOVIBOND. *(without)*

You muſt, you ſhall come back.

Enter BELLFORD, *leading in* HARRIET.

BELLFORD.

Don't be frightened. You are the object of my heart, and they will give you away.

LOVIBOND.

(forcing in Oldcaſtle, without looking behind him)

You are a party to the agreement: you muſt ſee her given away.

BELLFORD.

Here's the lady. *(leading her to Lovibond.)*

LOVIBOND.

Ay! ay! give me her hand. *(without ſeeing her.)* you ſhall ſee the buſineſs done, Mr. Oldcaſtle. Here, here; wounds! what is all this? Harriet!

OLDCASTLE.

Huzza! a reprieve!

MARY-ANN.

Ah! ſiſter there? What have you been writing letters too! *(goes up to her)* I be glad to ſee you.

LOVIBOND.

What does all this mean? What brought you hither, Madam?

HAR-

HARRIET.

My love for this gentleman. *(She takes Belford by the hand)*

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! ha! ſhe is his wife all this time.

HARRIET.

I was not by any means worthy of you, Sir; and ſo I have transferred my affections where I think they will be placed to advantage.

LOVIBOND.

I am ready to ſink into the ground with amazement!

OLDCASTLE.

Loll, toll, loll! brother Lovibond! you brought it all upon yourſelf. Ha! ha! ha! I pity and laugh at you. This is the education you have given her. Ha! ha!

LOVIBOND.

I ſhall die upon the ſpot.

OLDCASTLE.

Ha! ha! I ſaw what it would all end in. *(follows him about)* She would have been too young a wife for you, man. Ha! ha! I am heartily glad of it. Here, here, I'll give her away. Here Mr. Belford, take your wife.

BELFORD.

I accept her at your hands.

HARRIET.

And I give you mine, with all my heart!

OLDCASTLE.

Now, who underſtands education? Come, Madam, come you home with me. (*taking hold of Mary Ann.*)

MARY-ANN.

Ah! but I can't do that, for I be married as well as you, ſiſter. (*runs over to her*) He carried me to a parſon, and it was for all the world, like what you uſed to ſay (*to Oldcaſtle*) about love, honour, and obey.

OLDCASTLE.

What do I hear?

Enter BRUMPTON.

BRUMPTON.

Oh! ho! ho! what a day of adventures have I had!

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Mr. Brumpton! what a life you have led me!

BRUMPTON.

Yet you muſt excuſe me, Sir, when you recollect the letter the lady flung me out of the window.

Lo-

LOVIBOND.

Flung him a letter! ha! ha!

BRUMPTON.

And when you reflect, that you yourself brought me into her presence to receive this letter, in which she prays me to be her deliverer!

LOVIBOND.

Ha! ha! the contriver of his own misfortunes! Gave her the opportunity himself!

BELFORD.

And when you consider, Mr. Lovibond, that you brought me Harriet's messages, and delivered me this letter with your own hand!

LOVIBOND.

How is this!

HARRIET.

A declaration of my heart: I had nobody to carry it but you.

OLDCASTLE.

The contriver of his own ruin! delivered her a letter himself! ha! ha! how well he knows the world!

BRUMPTON.

Belford, give me your hand. We have been struggling hard for two sisters, and fortune has crown'd our endeavours with success.

OLDCASTLE.

Oh! Mary-Ann! you have deceived me, but I ſhall be glad to ſee you happy.

MARY-ANN.

And I am ſure, I ſhall be alway glad to ſee you, if you live theſe three years to come. Siſter Harriet, la! I longed like any thing to ſee you. I am glad we are both happy at laſt.

BRUMPTON.

A right uſe made of this event, will be of general ſervice to us all. To theſe gentlemen it may prove a School for Guardians, where they will learn not to bring upon themſelves the reproach of a diſhoneſt, an amorous, and contemptible old age. As to us, Belford, and theſe ladies, who are now embarked on a voyage for life, we cannot fail of happineſs.

To youth ſure rapture marriage ever brings,
When from eſteem the happy union ſprings,

FINIS.

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miſs ELLIOT.

LADIES, your ſervant—Servant, gentlemen all!
The ſame good folks to you, both great and ſmall.
Here's MARY-ANN *again:—but that an't fair!*
To jeer a ſimple girl you might forbear.
Who knows, ſince married, tho' you laugh and gaze,
But MARY-ANN *may learn your London ways?*
May ape your faſhions, ſince you've ſhewn her how,
And drop the maſk at once, as I do now.

Thus you behold, whatever the condition,
To new extremes how eaſy the tranſition.
'Tis ſo thro' life: to town from country fairs
The clown comes up, and gapes, and laughs, and ſtares!
Give him a liv'ry—whims unknown before!
He learns his maſter's follies to do o'er;
He drinks, turns coxcomb, and betts five to four.
Pray, may I, ladies, touch your modiſh life,
And ſhew good ſenſe and faſhion there at ſtrife?
"Oh! do, Miſs Elliot, ſays a prude with ſpite,
Pull 'em to pieces; bring their faults to light;
Pulling to pieces is my dear delight."
Why then each fair one ſeems a diff'rent creature
From what ſhe's meant, and traveſties her nature.

Proud of defects, FLIRTILLA *ſwims along,*
Politely weak, and elegantly wrong.

Through

Through the gay round of time her only care
To fix the patch, and guide a ſtraggling hair.

Lady CAMILLA, *form'd to ſeize the rein,*
To rival John, and ſmack along the plain;
In London ſickens with diſſembled airs,
And "help me, help me up theſe odious ſtairs."

Nature's beſt gifts we all with pride diſclaim;
We liſp, we totter, deaf, and blind, and lame.
The tongue indeed we women n'er confine;
Scandal's too dear a pleaſure to reſign.
Scandal, and cards, tea, mirth, and ſpleen, a ball,
Comus! the monkey too! and there's the life of all.
A life of whim! till from the faded eye,
And wither'd form the trembling graces fly.

There's a true picture!—how do ye like it, ladies?
How is the light? And how do you think the ſhade is?
A copy hence our ſimple girl may make;
Unleſs ſhe ſhould this wiſer counſel take,
Be rul'd by reaſon for your beauty's ſake.
Reaſon ſtill gives to radiant eyes their grace,
Warren's imperial milk *for ev'ry face!*
Beauty, ye fair, may forge the lover's chain;
But the mind's charms your empire muſt maintain.

THE

CHOICE:

A

COMEDY.

THE

CHOICE,

A

COMEDY,

IN TWO ACTS.

Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL

IN

DRURY-LANE.

Ut Nemo in ſeſe tentat deſcendere! Nemo!
Sed præcedenti ſpectatur Mantica Tergo.

PERSIUS.

Familiare eſt Hominibus omnia ſibi ignoſcere,
Nihil aliis remittere.

VELL. PAT.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

WOODVIL,	Mr. PACKER.
Sir WILLIAM LOVEWORTH,	Mr. YATES.
LOVEWORTH, his Son,	Mr. PALMER.

W O M E N.

Mrs. WOODVIL,	
CLARISSA,	Mrs. YATES.
WATCHIT,	Miſs BRADSHAW.

THE

CHOICE.

ACT the FIRST.

Enter WOODVIL *and* LOVEWORTH.

WOODVIL.

YOU ſurpriſe me, Mr. Loveworth: a perſon of your taſte exchange the pleaſures of a town-life, for rooks and country ſquires at this dead ſeaſon of the year! There is ſome myſtery in all this.

LOVEWORTH.

My dear Mr. Woodvil, diſſipation has had its day; and now calm reflection and the ſentiments of the heart outweigh all the pleaſures of the vain and giddy.

WOODVIL.

So! grown a moraliſt!—Well, be the cauſe what it may, I am glad to ſee you at FAIRFIELD.—And yet all this hurry, and a young lady with you!—My wife's curioſity will be at work, if ſhe finds her in the next room. Who is the lady?

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

Mr. Woodvil, the happineſs of my life is now at ſtake. Her beauty, her merit, her accompliſhments juſtify my choice.

WOODVIL.

Married?

LOVEWORTH.

Theſe ten days.

WOODVIL.

With your father's conſent?

LOVEWORTH.

No, there's the rub: his conſent nothing can obtain.

WOODVIL.

This may prove a ſerious buſineſs: the violence of Sir William's temper——

LOVEWORTH.

Yes; he ſtorms and raves at his uſual rate; and if your interpoſition cannot moderate his rage, I am ruined.

WOODVIL.

Has he ſeen the lady?

LOVEWORTH.

No; he poſitively refuſes; ſwears he will never acknow-

acknowledge her; is determined to marry again; and I am to be disinherited. In that resolution I left him in town, and you are now troubled with this visit.

WOODVIL.

If I can be of use to you, I shall think nothing a trouble. But your father, I fancy, lay at Grove-Place last night.

LOVEWORTH.

At Grove-Place! then must I fly the country.

WOODVIL.

No occasion for that: do nothing in a hurry. Suppose I go over to him?—What is his objection to the match?

LOVEWORTH.

His objection, according to the way of the world, is neither more nor less than——

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir William Loveworth sends his compliments, Sir. He reached Grove-Place last night, and if you are not engaged, he will wait upon you to dinner.

WOODVIL.

That's unlucky: I can't see him to day. Tell Sir William that——

LOVEWORTH.

You had better ſee him: let me be no hindrance. I can diſpoſe of myſelf out of his way.

WOODVIL.

It ſhall be ſo: a thought has juſt occurred to me. Where is the ſervant?

WATCHIT.

In the Hall, Sir.

WOODVIL.

Very well: Mr. Loveworth, excuſe me for a moment. [*Exit.*

LOVEWORTH.

Mrs. Watchit, you remember your promiſe. Secrecy is the word.

WATCHIT.

You may depend upon me, Sir.

LOVEWORTH.

My father's ſervant does not know that I am in the country, I hope.

WATCHIT.

Not a ſyllable: do you take me for a mar-plot?

LOVEWORTH.

You miſtake me; I know your prudence. I muſt not be ſeen by my father.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

By no means: I know Sir William, and ſo does the whole country round. He will be like a whirlwind, the moment he enters the houſe; and yet what he ſhould ſtorm at, I can't tell. You have married a ſweet young lady, that I can ſee already: ſhe is ſomebody, I'll warrant her; and what if ſhe has not a great fortune? Snap your fingers at fortune, Sir; ſhe is as good a ſort of a lady as a body would wiſh to know.

LOVEWORTH.

She is obliged to you, Mrs. Watchit. Keep our ſecret, and it may be in my power ſome time or other to——

Enter WOODVIL.

WOODVIL.

I have deſired to ſee Sir William. I have a ſcheme, which, ſhould it happen to ſucceed, may give a turn to your affairs. You muſt not be ſeen by him.—— Watchit, there is an apartment above ſtairs?

WATCHIT.

Yes, Sir, the alcove room.

WOODVIL.

There you may be concealed.

WATCHIT.

To be ſure, and his lady with him.

WOODVIL.

Hold you your tongue; that will not do.—Loveworth, your lady ſhall dine with Sir William.

LOVEWORTH.

Not for the world: expoſe her to a hurricane as ſoon.

WOODVIL.

Po! let me conduct this buſineſs. I can introduce her as a relation of mine: Sir William will then ſee her without prejudice, and who knows but—Say no more about it; I know it will do; truſt to me.

WATCHIT.

But your lady, Sir; won't her curioſity——

WOODVIL.

'Sdeath! I forgot that. Loveworth, my wife muſt not ſee you. Where is ſhe now, Watchit?

WATCHIT.

She walked out an hour ago: went acroſs the meadow towards the village: there is ſome ſcandal ſtirring there about farmer ASHFIELD's daughter; and ſhe is gone to make her enquiries.

WOODVIL.

Juſt as I could wiſh: Watchit, do you keep her from ſeeing my friend Loveworth, and his lady ſhall be a relation, whom my wife has never ſeen; my niece juſt come from Saliſbury. That will do.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

But how ſhall we keep my miſtreſs quiet, Sir? You know, if there is a ſecret going forward, ſhe will have a hundred eyes, all prying about.

WOODVIL.

Do you put her hundred eyes to ſleep: go now and learn where ſhe is, for fear of a ſurprize.

WATCHIT.

Here will be ſuch a piece of work. [*Exit.*

WOODVIL.

I had like to have forgot: you have not told me Sir William's objection.

LOVEWORTH.

The old objection, Sir: ſhe has no fortune; and this is not an age, in which merit without money is likely to meet with much favour.

WOODVIL.

That is among the few opinions, in which mankind have ſuffered no ſort of change.

LOVEWORTH.

Very true: ſyſtems of philoſophy have ſprung up in the world, varied, fluctuated, and given way to new devices: but he, who firſt ſaid that beauty, eloquence, wiſdom, and all ſufficient merit were included in money, was the father of a ſect, that ſpreads from the city-counter to the drawing room, and takes in at once the great vulgar and the ſmall.

WOODVIL.

And your father is so deep in his money-maxims, that reason will make a feeble stand against pounds, shillings, and pence.

LOVEWORTH.

And yet the amiable qualities of the person I have chosen—Hush!—I was beginning a very unfashionable panegyrick, and luckily I am interrupted.

Enter CLARISSA.

WOODVIL.

My friend, Ma'am, has let me into the whole secret, and I give you joy.

CLARISSA.

You will find me a troublesome guest, Sir.

WOODVIL.

When I have the honour of being better known to you, you will do me the justice to think that a visit from Mrs. Loveworth will always make me happy.

CLARISSA.

The afflicted can make but very indifferent company, and my spirits are in such an agitation——

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir William is arrived, Sir. He and my mistress are now walking up the avenue.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

Sir William?—Heavens!—where ſhall I fly?

WOODVIL.

Don't be alarmed, Ma'am, he ſhan't ſurprize you: I'll ſtep and meet him. [*Exit.*

WATCHIT.

And I'll keep a look out for you: don't be frightened. [*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

I ſhall never be able to ſupport myſelf in his preſence. He conſiders me as a diſgrace to his family.

LOVEWORTH.

Diſgrace, Clariſſa! he will in time acknowledge you an honour to his family.

CLARISSA.

I cannot think of ſeeing him. I am the cauſe of all this diſtraction and uneaſineſs. Why would you make me marry without his conſent? When I think to what a degree I have incenſed him againſt you—Let me entreat you, Mr. Loveworth, to remove me from this houſe. Indeed I am terribly diſconcerted.

LOVEWORTH.

My love, I grant, were you to face him at once in the character of my wife, the ſhock would be too great. But Sir William does not know you. My friend Mr. Woodvil takes an intereſt in our mutual happineſs. He will introduce you as his re-

lation, juſt come upon a viſit out of Wiltſhire. By degrees you may make an impreſſion upon my father, and win from him his conſent and approbation. The experiment is worth the trial. Conſider the conſequence it is of to me.—Why thoſe tears, my love?

CLARISSA.

Should he perſiſt in his reſolution to diſinherit you, I am the ſad occaſion of your ruin. (*weeps*)

LOVEWORTH.

You will be the occaſion of all that's dear to me in life. Dry up thoſe tears. We will depart this moment, if you chuſe it.

CLARISSA.

No; I have ſummoned up reſolution. I chuſe to ſtay. I have involved you in difficulties, and the leaſt I now can do, is to endeavour to extricate you. I feel new courage. I will ſee Sir William: I ſhall be able to go through it. But let me ſee, what character am I to aſſume? Oh! Mr. Woodvil's niece; and from where?

LOVEWORTH.

Juſt arrived from Saliſbury.

CLARISSA.

Very well; be it ſo. I'll undertake the part: it is a fair ſtratagem, and if I ſucceed in it——

Enter

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Sir, Sir; Madam, Madam; they are coming, and Mrs. Woodvil is ſo curious to ſee you! Fly, Mr. Loveworth; run up ſtairs, or you will be diſcovered.

LOVEWORTH.

'Sdeath! which way?

WATCHIT.

There; don't you ſee the ſtairs? Make haſte; diſpatch.

LOVEWORTH.

I am gone: the field is your own. [*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

How my heart flutters!

WATCHIT.

Courage, Madam; you can't fail of ſucceſs.

Enter WOODVIL.

WOODVIL. *(looking back as he enters)*

This way, Sir William: here is my niece. (*to Clariſſa*) Now call up all your reſolution.

CLARISSA. (*to Watchit*)

I ſhall certainly expire.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

You have nothing to fear: play this card well, and the game is yours.

WOODVIL.

Walk in, Sir William.

Enter Sir WILLIAM, *and* Mrs. WOODVIL.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay, I ſhall be glad to ſee a relation of yours, Mr. Woodvil.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Where is ſhe? I am not acquainted with that branch of your family, my dear (*to Woodvil*) upon my word! (*ſtands to look at Clariſſa*) And is this your niece? Well! you may be proud of her. I never ſaw your poor ſiſter, Mr. Woodvil: ſhe has been dead theſe ten years I think. A fine figure truly! Is ſhe like her mother? Sir William, don't you admire her? What a complexion! and ſuch a ſweetneſs in her countenance. You are welcome in theſe parts. I am free ſpoken, but when you and I are better acquainted, you will like me prodigiouſly, that I promiſe you.

CLARISSA.

That I dare ſay, Ma'am, but I cannot promiſe myſelf that I ſhall be ſo happy as to improve in your eſteem.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

She is a ſweet girl: why did you conceal her from me all this time? It was very croſs of you, Mr. Woodvil.

Woodvil.

Sir William, won't you ſalute my niece?

Clarissa. (*turning to Watchit*)

I ſhall ſink into the earth.

Sir William. (*advancing*)

She is rather baſhfull and ſhy.

Woodvil.

That will wear off: you will find her elegantly accompliſhed. Clariſſa, my friend Sir William Loveworth.

Sir William.

I am glad of this opportunity of paying my reſpects to ſo much beauty and ſo much apparent merit.

[*Salutes her.*

Clarissa. (*in confuſion*)

Sir—I—you do me honour, Sir. (*turns to Watchit*) What ſhall I do?

Watchit.

Have a good heart, and the day is your own, Ma'am.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You may be proud of her, Mr. Woodvil: ſhe is elegance itſelf.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

A perfect model! you never told me of her, my dear. (*to Woodvil*) And where have you hid yourſelf all this time? But you and I will have ſome talk by and by, and you ſhall tell me your whole hiſtory.

Sir WILLIAM.

Have you heard the hiſtory of my ſon, Mr. Woodvil? Do you know what the fellow has done?

WOODVIL.

Nothing that you may not overlook, I hope.

Sir WILLIAM.

Overlook! he has done what I ſhall never forgive: he has gone and married without my conſent, the blockhead! and thrown himſelf away for ever.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well!—you ſurprize me: to whom? When? When? What ſort of a body? What's her name? What's her fortune?

Sir WILLIAM.

Fortune? Not a groat. A booby! a numſkull! a vile ungrateſull profligate! the money I ſpent upon his education! yet you ſee what it ends in: could you think him capable of ſo raſh an action?

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

I always thought him guarded and prudent.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And did not he conſult your will and pleaſure?

CLARISSA. *(aſide to Watchit)*

I wiſh you would lead me out of the room.

Sir WILLIAM.

Conſult my will and pleaſure?—Yes, after he had played the fool; after he had ruined himſelf.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, that was wrong indeed: I do think that was wrong. Mr. Woodvil, he ſhould have had his father's leave: don't you think he ſhould? I am ſure you do, and ſo does your niece here, for ſhe looks like a good girl. There is no defending your ſon, Sir William. I always thought him a promiſing young man, but after ſuch an evil ſtep, there is not a word to ſay for him: is there, Miſs?

CLARISSA.

It is not for me to accuſe the gentleman.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, Ma'am, no; you are too polite to interfere in family-matters; but you can ſay nothing in his favour. Marry a woman without a groat!

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

A love affair, I ſuppoſe.

Sir WILLIAM.

A bankrupt affair! he will be beggar'd by it. He muſt pleaſe his own fancy, truly! and he has done it. 'Sdeath! that a black-eye and a white ſkin ſhould rob a man of his ſenſes!

WOODVIL.

Well, well; ſhe may be a deſerving young lady, and her family may make the connection not turn out a bad one.

Sir WILLIAM.

Her family? Let her family maintain her; why is the burthen to be thrown on me? Her family has no objection; I will anſwer for 'em: but is that an excuſe? Mrs. Woodvil, I appeal to you, and to you, Ma'am, though your uncle puts in a good word for a graceleſs—Now do you think (*to Clariſſa*) young as you are, do you think any apology can be made for diſobedience to a father?

CLARISSA.

The queſtion is too difficult for me, Sir; I am not a proper judge.

Sir WILLIAM.

I will cut him off with a ſhilling, that I can tell you: does not he know that I married a woman of fortune? That my father did the ſame? All my family from father to ſon have had the table of intereſt

tereſt in view, and not one of us ever did a fooliſh thing out of generoſity. This booby of mine is the firſt of the name that ever did a diſintereſted thing.

Mrs. Woodvil.

There is a great deal in what you ſay, Sir William.

Woodvil.

Prithee don't you——

Mrs. Woodvil.

What do I do? I don't meddle. What I ſay is all between ourſelves: I ſpeak only by way of converſation. Fortune is always ſomething to be ſure: I think it was twenty thouſand I brought you, my love: no, not twenty; yes, firſt and laſt: ten down: five by the death of—Ay, very true: firſt and laſt full twenty thouſand: but then I had conſent of uncles and aunts, and couſins, and relations, and all the old folks.

Woodvil.

Po! ſtuff! how you run on!

Mrs. Woodvil.

Nay, don't ſnub a body; you was welcome, my love; had it been double, you ſhould have had it all; that is with conſent of prudent people; nothing of the ſort ſhould be without conſent. Whatever your uncle ſays, let me adviſe you, Miſs, never marry withont conſent.

Cla-

CLARISSA.

How unlucky all this is! *(aſide to Watchit)*

WOODVIL.

And yet, Sir William, ſince it is done, it may be for the beſt. Have you ſeen the lady?

Sir WILLIAM.

Seen her! What ſhould I ſee her for? Did you ever hear a man reaſon like him? *(to Clariſſa)* Do you think, Ma'am,—you ſeem prudent, and I will aſk you?—Do you think it would be right to ſee a perſon, who has thrown my family into ſuch confuſion, and has been the ruin of my ſon? I could only ſpeak the language of reproach: would it be right of me to ſay harſh things to her face?

CLARISSA.

I believe you would not willingly act ſo cruel a part.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, no; it would anſwer no end.

WOODVIL.

I beg your pardon: you might find yourſelf miſtaken: you might, perhaps, ſee a lady poſſeſſed of accompliſhments, that would kindle up a flame even in your own breaſt, fond as you are of ſerving your intereſt.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, no; there I ſhould be proof. I am not tinder,

tinder, to take fire at the ſparkling of an eye. I have ſeen as much love among people who marry without any at all, as I have among your ſighing, whining, generous lovers.

Mrs. Woodvil.

That I can vouch. There was no great matter of love, Mr. Woodvil, between us at firſt: at leaſt on your part; but all in good time; it came by degrees: and, I think, you will allow that we have lived pure and happy.

Woodvil. *(aſide to Mrs. Woodvil)*

I wiſh you would not make yourſelf ridiculous.

Sir William.

Mr. Woodvil, to cut the matter ſhort, my ſon has ruined himſelf.—A blockhead, to throw himſelf away in this manner!——Did you ever ſee the fellow? *(to Clariſſa)*

Clarissa. *(in great confuſion)*

Yes, Sir; I have ſeen him; and when you ſee him again, perhaps——

Sir William.

Never; I will never ſee his face.—Marry without my conſent, and a beggar too!—He ſhall ſee that I am not to be trifled with. My fortune is in my own power; he ſhall be diſinherited, and that's the marriage-portion he will get by this amiable lady, on whom he has fixed his affections.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Heaven! ſupport me. *(ſhe faints)*

Sir WILLIAM. *(catching her in his arms)*

Hey! what's the matter now? She is not well.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, run for the hartſhorn.

WATCHIT.

I will, Madam. Poor young lady! You had better take her into the air, Sir. Dear me, I am in ſuch a flutter. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM. *(ſupporting her)*

She looks very handſome. Is ſhe ſubject to theſe diſorders, Mr. Woodvil?

WOODVIL.

I fancy not; ſhe is tired after her journey.

Sir WILLIAM.

Her colour returns: ſhe is coming to herſelf. Very beautiful indeed! If that fool, my ſon, had made ſuch a choice! How do you find yourſelf, Ma'am?

CLARISSA.

Oh! Sir!—I beg your pardon.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Leave her to my care. Step with me, my dear; the air will do her good. Come along. [*Exit.*

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You have not as yet recovered your ſtrength: let me attend you.

CLARISSA.

You are very polite, Sir, but I would not give you ſo much trouble.

Sir WILLIAM.

Trouble! it will be a pleaſure. Mr. Woodvil, I ſhall return in a moment. [*Exit with Clariſſa.*

WOODVIL.

He ſeems ſtruck already. How I ſhall laugh, if my ſcheme ſucceeds!

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH. *(peeping in)*

Mr. Woodvil, may I venture?

WOODVIL.

For a moment you may. If you but knew how things are going on here——

LOVEWORTH.

I overheard it all. But what have I done to Mrs. Woodvil? She takes a part againſt me.

WOODVIL.

She talks in her uſual ſtrain, without an idea of what ſhe would be at. Keep out of her way. I would

not have her know you are in the houſe: the ſecret would ſoon eſcape, only by way of converſation, as ſhe calls it. I cannot help laughing at this plot of mine: ſhould your wife ſteal into Sir William's good graces, before he knows who ſhe is—Ha! ha!

LOVEWORTH.

The contrivance is yours; and if it ſucceeds, I ſhall be for ever obliged to you.

WOODVIL.

It is an honeſt artifice, and worth the experiment.

LOVEWORTH.

Poor Clariſſa! I tremble to think what ſhe feels all this time. The hopes and fears, that agitate her tender boſom, make the interval dreadful.—'Sdeath! I hear ſomebody coming.

WOODVIL.

Fly; leave the room. No, you need not. All is ſafe. It is only *Watchit*: we ſhall get ſome intelligence from her.

Enter WATCHIT. *(laughing)*

WATCHIT.

Oh! this is charming. I ſhall die with laughing.

WOODVIL.

What's the matter?

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Juſt as you could wiſh: Sir William is gone into the garden with her. She trembles. and bluſhes; and he ſmiles, and ſays civil things, and takes her by the hand; and ſhe wiſhes to avoid him, and he follows her more eagerly; and my miſtreſs is all in amaze, and does not know what to make of it. She is ſure there is ſome ſecret going forward, and according to cuſtom, ſhe will never reſt till ſhe finds it out. I hear her coming. Mr. Loveworth, the plot's diſcovered, and we are all undone, if ſhe ſees you.

WOODVIL.

And I ſhall be talked to death, if ſhe ſees me. This way, Mr. Loveworth: follow me; I have ſomething further to ſay to you.

LOVEWORTH.

I attend you. Watchit, be upon your guard.

WATCHIT.

Po! po! never ſtand talking. Take care of yourſelf. Don't you hear her coming? Away with you. [*puſhing him.*

LOVEWORTH.

A thouſand thanks: I ſhall reward your pains. [*Exit.*

WATCHIT.

Huſh! not a word. How troubleſome theſe men are! now for her curioſity, and a ſpecimen of my talents.

Enter Mrs. Woodvil.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Watchit! you here alone! where is your maſter? Where is Mr. Woodvil? I left him here: where is he gone? What is he about? Is any body with him?

Watchit.

Not ſo loud, if you pleaſe, Ma'am: he deſired not to be diſturbed. Mr. Ruin, the lawyer, is with him: buſineſs of great importance upon the anvil.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Indeed! tell me; what is it?

Watchit.

Law, Ma'am! as if you did not know: why, you are acquainted with the whole affair.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Not a ſyllable, as I am a ſinner: nobody ever tells me any thing; and yet, I don't know why. I never repeat a word; I am as cloſe as oak. Well, tell me, Watchit; tell me the buſineſs.

Watchit.

Why, for a matter o'that, if you don't know it already, it is fit you ſhould. But then, Heaven help me! I am but a ſervant, and if the like of me talks in the family——

Mrs. Woodvil.

But you are ſafe with me; you may do good by imparting every thing to me.

Watchit.

Yes, Ma'am, I know that; but my maſter has forbid me to ſay a word.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

He ſhall never know that you ſpoke to me. I never betray any body. I always think before I ſpeak.

Watchit.

Why then, if you will promiſe——

Mrs. Woodvil.

I do promiſe, and I promiſe to reward you. Well?

Watchit.

Don't you know ſomething about this young lady, Ma'am?

Mrs. Woodvil.

No; nothing upon the face of the earth, except that ſhe is Mr. Woodvil's niece.

Watchit.

Yes, that of courſe: every body knows that. But, look you here, Ma'am—I am ruined if you ever ſay you heard it from me—Her errand in coming to this houſe is whimſical enough—She is in love; deep, far gone!

Mrs. Woodvil.

Ay!

Watchit.

And is come into theſe parts in purſuit of the perſon ſhe is ſo much ſmitten with.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Go on; go on, Watchit: who is she in love with? tell me all.

Watchit.

Can't you guess?

Mrs. Woodvil.

No, quite in the dark about it. Well, who is it?

Watchit.

You know how disobliged Sir William is by his son's misconduct; and you know that he has threatened to disinherit young Mr. Loveworth, and marry again.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Right; go on.

Watchit.

Now this young lady—but upon my life you must take no notice—this young lady is in love with Sir William up to the eyes, and my master would be glad to make a match of it. Who can blame him, if he wants to provide a good settlement for his own relation?

Mrs. Woodvil.

To be sure.

Watchit.

My master you know is a little shy: he does not like

like to open the affair too abruptly to Sir William; and that's what, I believe, he is now contriving with his attorney. Leave it all to their management, Ma'am. If you interfere, maſter will ſuſpect me.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, well! very well! any thing more?

WATCHIT.

Did not you ſee how the lady fainted away, when Sir William aſked her opinion?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So ſhe did; I ſee it all plain enough now.

WATCHIT.

When a young lady faints into a man's arms——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No doubt; the meaning is clear.

WATCHIT.

I have had ſome chat with her: ſhe is hurt to the very quick to ſee Sir William made unhappy by his ſon: ſhe thinks him the beſt of characters, and what is very odd, ſhe ſays he is the handſomeſt man ſhe ever ſet eyes upon. She ſaw him laſt ſummer at the muſick-meeting at Saliſbury, and has raved about him ever ſince.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Indeed!—It will be a good match for the girl, if it can be brought about.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Yes, for ſure: ſhe owned her love to me, but ſhe rather thinks Sir William a little cruel—no, no; ſhe did not ſay cruel;—A little ſevere to the ſon: he ought, ſhe ſays, to make a proviſion for him; and if it ſhould be her luck to marry Sir William, ſhe will intercede for the young gentleman, though he has been ſo imprudent as to marry without his father's conſent.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

The good girl!

WATCHIT.

Yes, ſhe is all goodneſs; ſhe bears the character of it. As ſweet a temper as a body would wiſh to know. As I live and breathe, here comes my maſter —No; It's Sir William. Don't take any notice to him. Leave it all to Mr. Woodvil's contrivance. He knows how to bring about the match. Here he comes, Ma'am. I am gone. If you ſay a word of what I have been telling you, it will be as much as my place is worth. [*Exit.*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Go, go your way. Truly! as if I did not know how to keep a ſecret.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

I admire your garden, Mrs. Woodvil. It is much im-

improved ſince I ſaw it; and your niece, as Milton has it,

———Oft ſtooping to ſupport
Each flow'r of tender ſtalk, mindleſs the while
Herſelf, the faireſt unſupported flow'r.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

That is ſo pretty, and ſo gallant!

Sir WILLIAM.

If that ſon of mine had propoſed for her, what objection could I have made? None; I ſhould have been pleaſed with an alliance in my friend Woodvil's family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I am really much chagrined for your ſon. There is no ſaying any thing in his defence.

Sir WILLIAM.

No, let him repent it; and he will have reaſon: I ſhall marry again. Your niece, I think, has never been in theſe parts before: any particular reaſon for her coming now?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No;—I believe—*(ſmiles at him)* don't aſk me; I never know any thing.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, I beg pardon.

Mrs,

Mrs. Woodvil.

No harm, Sir William—I could—But no, no; I know nothing—I can't help ſmiling—you would ſmile too if you knew all: but let Mr. Woodvil tell you.

Sir William.

Well, I ſuppoſe he will, if it be proper.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Yes, I dare ſay he will.—Well, you are a lucky man. Pray, let me aſk you: was you at Saliſbury laſt ſummer?

Sir William.

I was, Madam. why do you aſk?

Mrs. Woodvil.

Aſk me no queſtions.—It is diverting too—*(ſmiles at him)* Only now by way of converſation, did you ſee the young lady you have been juſt talking to in our garden?

Sir William.

She eſcaped my obſervation.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Well, I wonder at it.—Nothing eſcapes her. *(ſmiles at him)* She ſaw you.—Promiſe me not to ſay a word——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You may rely upon me.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is very whimſical:—ſhe ſaw you and is deeply ſmitten.

Sir WILLIAM.

With me?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

With you: take no notice. Mr. Woodvil will take it very ill, if he hears that I ſaid a word. She grieves to ſee you afflicted as you are by the behaviour of your ſon. She takes an intereſt in every thing that concerns you.

Sir WILLIAM.

I am greatly obliged to her.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So you are, if you know all.—Well, young girls do fall in love ſo unaccountably. She is up to the eyes in love with you. (*laughing heartily*)

Sir WILLIAM.

In love with me!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

She loves you; I know it. So now you may make your own uſe of it.—And look ye—She rather thinks you ſevere to your ſon, and I can tell you, if ſhe has ever any influence, you will find her his beſt friend.

She

She will intercede for him; ſhe will never be at reſt till you make ſome proviſion for him.

Sir WILLIAM.

A generous way of thinking.—In love with me!—(*looking pleaſed*) No, no; it cannot be.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is certainly ſo.

Sir WILLIAM. (*laughing*)

No, no;—ſhe is very handſome. If my ſon had been able to diſtinguiſh her merit——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Who could have blamed him?

Sir WILLIAM.

Quite another thing that would have been. You are a laughing at me all this time.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Never ſuſpect it, Sir William: did you ever know me guilty of a joke?

Sir WILLIAM.

Your niece is quite recovered now, I dare ſay.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You ſaw how ſhe fainted in your arms?

Was

Sir WILLIAM.

Was there any thing particular in that?

Mrs. WOODVIL. *(ſmiles at him)*

You don't know the impreſſion you have made. —She was terribly ſhocked at ſeeing you ſo unhappy. She took it to heart.

Sir WILLIAM.

I'll take another turn in the garden, I think. Now I recollect, it was with a peculiar glance ſhe eyed me. Will you take a turn in the garden?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You had better go alone. They may ſuſpect that I have been telling you.—Huſh! not a word—here ſhe comes, and Mr. Woodvil with her.

Enter WOODVIL, *and* CLARISSA.

WOODVIL.

Come, come, you are well now, and the company won't allow you to ſhun them.

Sir WILLIAM.

By no means. I hope you find yourſelf perfectly recovered. (*going up to her.*)

CLARISSA. (*diſconcerted*)

It was only a ſudden ſurprize, Sir: it is over now: I am much obliged to you.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

I heartily rejoice to see you so well. *(goes to Mrs. Woodvil)* Did you mark those stolen glances? *(aside)*

CLARISSA. *(aside to Woodvil)*

If you but knew the inward conflict I endure.

WOODVIL.

Well, well; summon up your spirits. *(aside)*

Sir WILLIAM. *(looks at her)*

She is wonderfully agreeable. *(aside to Mrs. Woodvil)* I am sorry, Madam—*(going to Clarissa)* that I abruptly mentioned any thing of my son's behaviour. I spoke harshly perhaps, and my violence might have a sudden effect upon your sensibility.

CLARISSA. *(in confusion)*

I will not dissemble, Sir, that the warmth and violence of your resentment did overpower my spirits. I am sorry that your son has offended you. If I might presume, his case may admit of some alleviation. The lady may, perhaps, be to blame.

Sir WILLIAM.

To blame! ay, to be sure she is. A woman without any substance, without a shilling——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

That is an objection for certain.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

And yet the lady may be of a family——

Sir WILLIAM.

Yes, family enough, but a ruined family.

CLARISSA.

Misfortune you will hardly think an object of ridicule, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

It is a good reaſon to ſhun the alliance.

CLARISSA.

I am an unfit perſon to take the lady's part. [*Walks away.*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You ſee how unwilling ſhe is to contradict you. (*aſide to Sir William*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide to Mrs. Woodvil*)

I admire her of all things.

WOODVIL. (*aſide to Clariſſa*)

Conſider that my friend Loveworth's happineſs is at ſtake; go on with this, and he will have reaſon to thank you.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*aſide to Sir William*)

I told you ſhe would take your ſon's part.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide*)

I like her the better for it: it beſpeaks a generous mind.—Madam, (*following Clariſſa*) I admire your delicacy: you have ſomething to offer in behalf of the lady, whom my ſon—I never ſaw her, and I believe I never ſhall. Do you think it would be right in me to ſee her, only to ſpeak the language of reproach?

CLARISSA.

She would never be able to bear the preſence of an incenſed and angry father, who imputes to her the diſtractions of his family——(*almoſt in tears*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide to Mrs. Woodvil*)

How tender her ſentiments are!

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*aſide to him*)

She feels for your uneaſineſs. I think you may be now convinced, that all I have told you is true.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide*)

Yes, I ſee it plainly: I have always had a young look. (*walking towards Clariſſa*) I ſhall be glad to hear ſo agreeable an advocate, though I fancy you will find the cauſe already determined.

CLARISSA.

I would not preſume too far, Sir; but ſtill there may be ſomething to ſay for your ſon. His regard for the lady may be founded on a ſincere eſteem for her good qualities; for good qualities ſhe may have: it is at leaſt poſſible that ſhe may.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Po! that's a ſuppoſition in the air.

CLARISSA. (*in confuſion*)

I grant it, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*to Sir William*)

Mark her deference for you.

CLARISSA.

I can't pretend to vindicate the lady, Sir. Of her merit I can have but little to ſay: but your ſon—he has undoubted virtues.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide to Woodvil*)

How does ſhe know?

WOODVIL.

She has heard me ſpeak of him.

Sir WILLIAM.

Why, to ſay the truth, Madam, my ſon had ſome merit; till he ruined all by this raſh action: the fellow did carry his letter of recommendation about him.

CLARISSA.

Then the lady, on whom he has fixed his choice, is to be pitied. If her inclination is not merely mercenary, but raiſed and kindled by deſert; if ſhe ſincerely loves him, and if by marrying him, ſhe has ſacrificed

crificed herſelf, and the object of her affection too—(*walks away, endeavouring to ſuppreſs her tears*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*to Woodvil*)

She has a delicate way of thinking.

WOODVIL.

The moſt tender-hearted girl in the world.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And I fancy ſhe is a little *nerviſh* into the bargain: I uſed to be *nerviſh* myſelf.

Sir WILLIAM.

She affects me ſtrangely. Come, we'll talk no more about this unlucky buſineſs. With your leave, Madam, (*going to Clariſſa*) we will change the ſubject.

CLARISSA.

I ſhould be ſorry to give you diſpleaſure, Sir. I hope I have not preſumed too far. (*ſhe walks away*) Heigho!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

A tender ſymptom that ſigh. (*to Sir William*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*advancing towards Clariſſa*)

You ſhould not ſigh, Madam; it is a bad habit.—She is an angel!—(*advancing nearer*) A young lady, like you, ſhould be all gaiety, all wit, pleaſure, and vivacity.—(*ſmiling*) You have no reaſon, I hope, for ſighing.

Enter

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Dinner's upon table, Sir.

WOODVIL.

Very well: come, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Will you pleaſe to favour me with your hand, Ma'am?

CLARISSA. *(frightened)*

You do me too much honour, Sir.

Sir WILLIAM.

The honour is to me. *(he takes her hand)* Mrs. Woodvil, you are right *(ſmiling at her)* Mr. Woodvil, you have an elegant young lady here—Madam, I have the honour to attend you.

[*Exit with Clariſſa.*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Come, Mr. Woodvil, come along, my love. I am in the ſecret for all you, and I hope you will be able to make a match of it. [*Exit.*

WOODVIL.

In the ſecret is ſhe? Watchit, have you been blabbing?

WATCHIT.

Not for the world, Sir: ſhe knows nothing of the matter.

WOODVIL.

Very well: keep her in the dark, and things may go on as I could wiſh. [*Exit.*

WATCHIT.

This is charming: the hook is baited, and Sir William will be gudgeon enough to bite. Oh! ho! ho! my ſtars! this is for ever the way of the world.

Men for their actions call their neighbours fools,
Then do the ſame, and mock their former rules.

End of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT the SECOND.

Enter WATCHIT *and* LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

IN love with her, ſay you?

WATCHIT.

In love; up to his eyes; he has it through the very heart; paſſionately fond of her. They are all together below ſtairs; Mrs. Woodvil, by my contrivance, has helped to bring it all about. She thinks ſhe is in the ſecret, and is completely happy that ſhe has ſomething that ſhe ought to tell nobody, and which burns in her breaſt till ſhe tells it to every body. Mr. Woodvil is pleaſed to ſee his ſcheme in a fair way to ſucceed. He is every moment running out of the room, to laugh in private at the whole affair. There, Sir; does not that make you happy?

LOVEWORTH.

I am for ever obliged to you, Mrs. Watchit. This is the luckieſt incident! my father has plunged deeper into the ſnare than I expected.

WATCHIT.

Yes; he is caught. All dinner-time his attention was fixed upon your lady; and the ſweet confuſion ſhe was in convinced Sir William, that it

was the bluſh of love that coloured her cheek. When the ladies withdrew, he would not ſtick to his bottle, according to cuſtom: no, no; he is tired of drinking; he roſe from table, and went about the houſe from room to room in queſt of your lady, ſtruggling to conceal his deſign, and looking ſo fooliſh at every diſappointment! At laſt he found her, and ladies, ſays he, I am come to beg a diſh of tea of you.

LOVEWORTH.

He never uſed to drink tea.

WATCHIT.

I know it. And then had you but ſeen him at the tea-table, with his aukward civility, watching opportunities to aſſiſt the ladies, and with a buſtle of good-nature putting every thing into confuſion.

LOVEWORTH.

Perfectly like him: I know his way.

WATCHIT.

The leaſt motion was too much for your lady's delicacy; it gave him pain to ſee her have ſo much trouble: "Ma'am, give me leave to pour out the "tea for you.—Sir, you give yourſelf too much trou-"ble—My deareſt Madam, to attend you is a plea-ſure;"—And at laſt, in a hurry of politeneſs, he tumbled down the tea-table, broke the china, and ſcalded the dogs. They fell a barking; he made apologies; "ladies I beg your pardon.—Sir, you need "not.—I proteſt it was an accident: bow, wow, "wow;" and ſo all was uproar, laughter, noiſe, and confuſion.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

But poor Clariſſa all this time!

WATCHIT.

She acts her part delightfully.

LOVEWORTH.

Has Sir William declared himſelf to her?

WATCHIT.

Not as yet, I believe: but he is ſtruck with her, that is too plain. I don't know whether ſhe ſees it, but every body elſe does.

LOVEWORTH.

If he once takes it into his head to make love to her, it will be a ſtroke of ſurprize upon her. I fear ſhe will hardly have courage enough to carry on the plot.

WATCHIT.

I'll be anſwerable for her. No want of talents there; that I can ſee faſt enough.

LOVEWORTH.

Is there no danger of his coming up ſtairs?

WATCHIT.

Po! he can't ſtir: your lady has him like a great gudgeon at the end of her line.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

But Mrs. Woodvil may be prying about the houſe.

WATCHIT.

Never fear her; there is enough to employ her below ſtairs.

LOVEWORTH.

Well, amongſt you be it. If Sir William is really ſmitten, ſome good may come of this.

WATCHIT.

We ſhall manage the old gentleman to ſome purpoſe. Huſh! ſtay, ſtay; I hear ſomebody coming. Mrs. Woodvil, as I live and breathe: away, Mr. Loveworth; in there, into that room (*he runs in; ſhe ſhuts the door*) Was there ever ſuch a man? We ſhall be detected. (*ſpeaks through the key-hole*) Bolt the door.

Enter Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

So, Mrs. Buſy-body! what were you doing in that room?

WATCHIT.

That room, Ma'am? I was not in that room. The door is locked, Ma'am.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Yes, I recollect: I locked it myſelf. Watchit, come

come hither. There is ſome myſtery in all this, which I don't comprehend.

WATCHIT.

Myſtery, Ma'am?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Hold your tongue; liſten to me. Mr. Woodvil was every moment running out of the room, and whiſpering with you, and ſtifling a laugh, that I ſaw playing upon every feature of his face: what does all this mean?

WATCHIT.

Mean, Ma'am? Why that my maſter is glad to ſee his niece in a fair way of preferment. He is pleaſed, and he looks pleaſed: can any thing be more natural?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

There is ſomething which I cannot penetrate. Mr. Woodvil and Sir William are now locked up in the ſtudy, and I am ſhut out: what is that for?

WATCHIT.

Dear Ma'am, the men always ſettle theſe things among themſelves you know. There is money I ſuppoſe to be talked of, and jointures, and ſuch like.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, I ſuſpect you: you know more than you tell me. And this young lady,—I doubt whether ſhe is my huſband's niece. It looks romantic, I think.

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

Dear Madam!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Very romantic, and not a little marvellous. Why ſhe knows nothing of the family. I have tried her; aſked her queſtions; ſhe bluſhes and looks ſilly, and gives anſwers that are juſt ſo much of nothing at all.

WATCHIT.

Dear me! you know, Ma'am, ſhe was not educated at home: in a boarding-ſchool at Chelſea from five years old.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Was ſhe? That may be. And yet ſhe is not like my huſband's ſiſter: all the family pictures are in that room: I'll go and examine the picture this moment; and, Watchit, do you go and intice her up ſtairs. I'll confront her and the picture; you will then ſee that there is no reſemblance, none in the world. Step, and bring her up ſtairs. I'll go and view the picture this moment. [*going.*

WATCHIT. (*aſide*)

This muſt never be; we are all blown up in the air—Madam, Madam, you are quite wrong: this is all nothing: there is indeed an affair, which if—— a——

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay! what affair? What is it?

WATCHIT.

WATCHIT.

People bewilder themſelves about trifles: what I have to tell you is of conſequence.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Indeed! of conſequence, ſay you?

WATCHIT.

It is fit Mr. Woodvil ſhould know it, and without loſs of time: immediately; now, now, this very inſtant.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Tell it now then: how tedious you are?

WATCHIT.

Law, Ma'am! you are ſo impatient!—what ſhall I ſay to her? (*aſide*)—The affair, Madam, is this ——If what I hear be true, it is enough to alarm the whole family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Bleſs me! what is it? Speak. Why conceal it from me?

WATCHIT.

You know my character, Ma'am; not one of your buſy meddlers in what does not belong to them. And yet it were a pity Sir William ſhould carry it in this faſhion, and impoſe upon good people, without ſo much as a hint to put you all upon your guard.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

You terrify me: no more preamble; go on.

Watchit.

Have you heard nothing of Sir William lately?

Mrs. Woodvil.

Nothing particular.

Watchit.

Ah! Madam!—Don't you see that there is something unaccountable in his falling in love at first sight?—That is always his way; a general lover, that I can tell you. A seraglio of ladies! and though he rails at his son, he has gone lately and married one of his Madams, as privately as he could, and he thinks nobody knows it.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Are you sure of this?

Watchit.

What do I keep up an intimacy with Mrs. Tattleaid, his housekeeper, for, and all the rest of the family? Sad doings!—you must not say you had it from me—but you ought to know the affair, and nobody will make a discreeter use of it—he has married his Dulcinea; and because he fancies it a profound secret, he thunders out against his son; and all this pretended love, in a moment, for my master's niece, is only to decoy her, to deceive her, to ruin her, poor dear young lady! (*in tears*) I pity her so I do, and I am sure she deserves a better lot, than to be the

the prey of such vile, profligate libertines, that's what she does. *(crying bitterly)*

Mrs. Woodvil.

This is very good, this is kind of you, and the whole family is obliged to you. The girl's ruin must be prevented. I could not have thought Sir William capable——

Watchit.

Lord, Ma'am! he is capable of any thing: the whole parish knows it: but tenants are cautious, and hush-money goes a great way. There is not a moment to be lost, Ma'am: if something is not done, and that directly too——

Mrs. Woodvil.

Leave it to my discretion: I'll go and see what he and Mr. Woodvil are about.

Watchit.

Don't seem to know any thing of the matter to Sir William. Suppose you take my master aside.

Mrs. Woodvil.

It is fit he should know it: stay you there: leave all to my discretion. we need not quarrel with Sir William you know. I am glad I have found this out. I'll keep my own secret, and yet have an eye upon their motions. This is such a discovery.

[*Exit.*

Watchit.

WATCHIT.

So; I have got rid of her. She will go with her ſtory to Mr. Woodvil, and he will only laugh at her.

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

A deſperate game you have been playing, Watchit: this may embaraſs us all.

WATCHIT.

We ſhould have been in a worſe ſcrape, had her curioſity led her to diſcover you lurking in that room: don't you ſee that? Nothing but a new ſecret could have drawn her off from the ſcent ſhe was upon.

LOVEWORTH.

Well, I don't know what to ſay to it?

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

Oh! Watchit; I am frightened out of my wits. Mr. Loveworth, how do you find yourſelf all this while? I am ſo glad to have an opportunity of ſpeaking to you. Sir William will never forgive me, when he finds out who I am. And what is in the wind with Mrs. Woodvil? I met her on the ſtairs; the caſt of her eye terrified me to death. She has found out the whole affair, I believe.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH.

You are too eaſily alarmed: if you will but command yourſelf——

WATCHIT.

Run, Mr. Loveworth; get out of the way. I hear Sir William.

[*Exit Loveworth and ſhuts the door after him.*

CLARISSA.

It were beſt to explain every thing to him.

WATCHIT.

By no means, Madam: things are not ripe as yet.

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

Ay, here ſhe is. I have found her at laſt.

WATCHIT.

I am glad he is come, and now I'll leave 'em together (*aſide*)—Did you ſee Madam Woodvil below ſtairs, Sir?

Sir WILLIAM.

I left her with my friend Woodvil.

WATCHIT.

They will be wanting me: you will excuſe me, Madam: dear heart, there will be ſuch a racket!

[*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

The wench is gone as I could wiſh.—(*ſtands looking at Clariſſa*)—I never was ſo ſtruck with beauty in all my days (*aſide*)—I have been—(*advancing towards her*)—I have been impatient, Madam, for an opportunity: won't you be pleaſed to ſit down?

CLARISSA.

I ſhall be ill again, I fear. (*ſits down*)

Sir WILLIAM. (*ſmiling and ſetting near her*)

I ſay, Madam, I have been impatient for an opportunity to—to—what's come over me? I feel ſtrangely affected (*aſide*)——I am no longer a ſtranger, Madam, to you and your affections.

CLARISSA.

Sir! (*frightened*)

Sir WILLIAM.

I know you, Madam; I know your way of thinking; and what at firſt appeared a myſtery——

CLARISSA.

If you know me, Sir, I hope your generoſity will excuſe——

Sir WILLIAM.

No apology, pray. I am glad to find that I am not an object of your hatred.

CLARISSA.

Hatred, Sir?—If you could read my heart, you would perceive there the moſt perfect eſteem——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Eſteem! (*laughing conceitedly*) with what reſerve ſhe phraſes it? (*aſide*)—Eſteem, Madam? Call it by a more tender name. (*drawing nearer*) We are now alone, and may throw off all diſguiſe. Come, come; (*ſmiling*) though you don't know it, I am in the ſecret.—Mrs. Woodvil has repoſed a confidence in me: ſhe has told me all.

CLARISSA.

Then, Sir, ſhe has told you, that I am diſpoſed to pay you every mark of attention and regard: that it is impoſſible to have a more ſincere——

Sir WILLIAM.

You honour, Ma'am; you do me honour; and if you chuſe to paſs your time at Grove-Place——

CLARISSA.

It is the ambition of my heart, Sir. It is the happineſs at which I aſpire.

Sir WILLIAM.

This open, this candid declaration tranſports me, beyond the power of words to expreſs. You confirm all that Mrs. Woodvil told me; and it ſhall be the ſtudy of my life to promote your happineſs.

CLARISSA.

You have given a new turn to my ſpirits, Sir William: you have raiſed me to new life. I am for ever obliged to Mrs. Woodvil for bringing about what I deſpaired of ever attaining.

Sir WILLIAM.

We are both obliged to her: and as to my ſon—I can be very deciſive—For your ſake I am determined that he ſhall never enter my doors.

CLARISSA.

Sir! *(in great confuſion)*

Sir WILLIAM.

An abandoned profligate!

CLARISSA.

Your words alarm me, Sir: you terrify me out of my ſenſes. I thought Mrs. Woodvil had ſettled every thing.

Sir WILLIAM.

She has, Ma'am; ſhe has ſettled matters to our mutual advantage. She has told me too, that you have a kind of partiality for my ſon: but your goodneſs muſt not be thrown away upon ſo undeſerving a——

CLARISSA.

I confeſs, I have a partiality for him. And after all, his crime may not be ſo great as you imagine. He has married without a fortune; but you may find hereafter that he has connected himſelf with a perſon who will ſhew herſelf, in every part of her conduct, ſenſible of the obligation. If ſhe has not brought riches into your family, ſhe may have qualities that will more than atone for the want of fortune. Inſtead of the pride, and I may ſay, the inſolence of wealth, complyance and condeſcenſion may be hers. If ſhe has no right to expenſive pleaſures, ſhe may practice œco-

œconomy; and, Sir, ſhe may be gratefull, in proportion to the kindneſs and generoſity of the family, into which ſhe has married.

Sir WILLIAM.

She argues the point well: ſhe will ſuit my temper exactly. (*aſide*) I admire your ſentiments, Madam, but ſtill——

CLARISSA.

Permit me, Sir, to ſay a word more. When a perſon in affluent circumſtances, or of conſiderable expectations, can forego all views of intereſt, and follow the impulſe of elegant, of generous affections; the lady, on whom he fixes his choice, may in return make his inclinations the rule of her conduct. In his happineſs hers may center. And if I may ſpeak out, ſhe, who deſtitute of riches, brings honour and virtue into a family, carries with her what many families want.

Sir WILLIAM.

There is ſpirit and good ſenſe in every thing ſhe utters. (*aſide*) You are a powerfull advocate; you plead too well for a graceleſs libertine. But have a a care; don't carry it too far. You may prevail, and hurt yourſelf. It is your intereſt to urge no more. To differ from you will not be in my power. I feel your influence already: It is reſiſtleſs, and ſo I ſhall go and tell your uncle this very moment. He ſhall know my mind immediately, and then, Madam, the whole affair will be concluded.—Your behaviour has charmed me; (*bowing to her*) it has won my heart. I ſhall wait upon you, as ſoon as I have talked the matter over with Mr. Woodvil. (*bows*)—She is a charming girl, and I'll marry her without delay.

[*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

Every thing concluded !—what does he mean ? There is ſome ſtrange miſunderſtanding between us.

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT. (*laughing*)

Excuſe me, Madam : I can't help laughing : this goes on charmingly.

CLARISSA.

Oh ! Watchit, what ſhall I do ?

WATCHIT.

You have done admirably.

Enter LOVEWORTH.

LOVEWORTH.

Yes, I am witneſs: ſhe is carrying on an intrigue in my hearing, and almoſt before my face.

CLARISSA.

Oh ! Mr. Loveworth, if you had any feeling for my diſtreſs——

LOVEWORTH.

Diſtreſs ! what diſtreſs ? You have gained a complete victory ; you have made an abſolute conqueſt. Maintain your ground, and you force him preſently to ſurrender upon your own terms.

CLA-

CLARISSA.

We had better acquaint him with the whole truth. It does not become me to try theſe artifices. When he finds himſelf the dupe of this ſtratagem, he will never forgive me.

WATCHIT.

Dear Madam, you are enough to diſtract a body; when things are in ſuch a fine way, you are going to ruin yourſelf and Mr. Loveworth too.

LOVEWORTH.

It is even ſo: Sir William has not gone far enough as yet: when he is upon the very brink of matrimony with you, can he afterwards condemn my conduct? When he finds himſelf the captive of your beauty, will not that be my apology? And do you wiſh to deprive me of it?

CLARISSA.

You know I don't; but I am afraid of provoking his reſentment: I have no right to paſs a trick upon him.

WATCHIT.

Huſh! you are both diſputing, and the enemy is ſtealing a march upon you. Here comes Madam Woodvil. Back to your room Mr. Loveworth, run back this moment.

LOVEWORTH.

Confuſion! that troubleſome woman! [*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

Let me go with him.

WATCHIT.

No, that will never do: you are wanted here. Stay, ſtay, I have the key, and I'll ſecure the door. I know her curioſity; but if ſhe outwits me——*(locks the door)*

Enter Mrs. WOODVIL.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Clariſſa, I have been looking for you every where. ——So! *(ſeeing Watchit at the door)* At that door again?—What is going forward? *(aſide)*——I ſay, where have you been, Clariſſa? What have you been about?

WATCHIT.

I wanted to ſhew the lady the family pictures in the next room, Ma'am; but I can't find the key.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Well, well; never mind it now: another time will do.—Clariſſa, where have you been hiding yourſelf?—Your uncle wants you below: Sir William is prodigiouſly enamoured, and he means to finiſh the buſineſs without loſs of time. I have given you a helping hand, I promiſe you.

CLARISSA.

Your intentions are very good, Ma'am; but you will excuſe me at preſent. I cannot go down any more to night.

WATCHIT,

WATCHIT.

Yes; let us go down: get her away from this place. *(aſide)*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

What are you meddling for, Mrs. Pert? What have you been ſaying?

CLARISSA.

She has ſaid nothing improper: but the hurry of this affair—I have reaſons for deferring it.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Reaſons! what reaſons? Tell me your reaſons. Come, come; you muſt comply. Watchit, do you ſtep and do as I ordered you.

WATCHIT.

Yes, Ma'am, I ſhall take care. [*Exit.*

CLARISSA.

Permit me to continue here.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

By no means: would you mar you fortune?

CLARISSA.

If you will inſiſt upon it— [*Exit.*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! it muſt be ſo. We cannot diſpenſe with your company. (*going, looks back*) And now I will ſee

ſee what Watchit was about in that room: I have a double key to every door in the houſe, though ſhe little thinks it. Yes, here is the key. (*takes a candle off the table*) I will know what ſhe has been about; I am reſolved I will. (*goes to unlock the door*)

Enter WATCHIT.

WATCHIT. (*peeping in and ſpeaking ſoftly*)

I thought as much: I gueſſed ſhe would be at that work. The deuce go with it! how did ſhe come by that key? What ſhall I do?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Now for it. (*opens the door and goes in*)

WATCHIT.

This is the very malice of fortune.

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

A man here! help! murder! oh!

WATCHIT.

So; ſhe faints; ſhe falls in a ſwoon: the candle out too! oh! the luckieſt accident!

Enter LOVEWORTH. (*in a violent hurry.*

LOVEWORTH.

Death and confuſion! I am diſcovered.

WATCHIT.

No, no, no; all's ſafe; ſhe is in a fit; leave her to her-

herſelf. *(takes the other candle off the table)* This way; follow me; make haſte. *(going)*

LOVEWORTH.

Away then; let me eſcape. *(going)*

WATCHIT. *(ſtopping at the door)*

More misfortunes! your father coming up ſtairs!

LOVEWORTH.

What brings him again? Is there no door, no window——

WATCHIT.

Here, here; come this way; ſtand there. *(places him at the ſide of the door)* Don't ſay a word. *(puts out the candle)*

Enter Sir WILLIAM.

Sir WILLIAM.

Not here? all in darkneſs: what is become of her? *(walking forward* I left her in this room.

LOVEWORTH.

Fortune, I thank you! I'll get out of his way. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

If the young dog marries to pleaſe his fancy, I have a right to pleaſe mine.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil. *(within)*

Oh! oh! oh!——help——

Sir William.

How? the cry of diſtreſs! ſhe is taken ill again I fear: which is the way?

Mrs. Woodvil. *(within)*

Oh! oh! I ſhall die.——

Sir William.

Zookers! I muſt relieve her.

Watchit.

For the love of mercy, Sir. *(kneels before him)*

Sir William.

Another voice?

Mrs. Woodvil. *(within)*

Oh! oh!——

Sir William.

It comes this way: I muſt go to her aſſiſtance. *(runs forward, and tumbles over a chair)* Hey! what the devil is all this?

Watchit.

Thieves! murder! all broke into the houſe: have compaſſion upon a poor ——

(lays hold of Sir William)

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

All mad I believe: houſe; ſervants; will nobody come?

WATCHIT. (*holding him*)

You ſhall not have your wicked will: I never will conſent: my virtue is all I have to depend upon. Mr. Woodvil; Robert; George.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hey! what's the matter now?

WATCHIT.

Spare my life; ſpare my honour; ſpare my innocence.

Sir WILLIAM.

This is the ſtrangeſt accident!

WATCHIT.

Will nobody come? A parcel of Jews to ruin all Chriſtian virtue.

Enter WOODVIL, *with a light.*

WATCHIT.

You ſhall not force me: I never will yield.

WOODVIL.

Hey! what have we here?

Sir

WATCHIT.

Oh! Sir, I am glad you are come. This vile man, I don't know who he is——

WOODVIL.

Sir William!

WATCHIT.

How! Sir William?

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Woodvil! You are come moſt opportunely. Such confuſion here!

Mrs. WOODVIL. (*within*)

Oh! will no body bring a light?

WOODVIL.

Hey! more diſtreſs! what is the meaning of all this? [*Exit.*

WATCHIT. (*riſing*)

I could not have thought ſuch wickedneſs was in you, Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Hell and confuſion! what has poſſeſſed you all?

Enter WOODVIL, *leading Mrs. Woodvil.*

WOODVIL.

Don't be frightened, my dear: what is the matter?

Mrs.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! Mr. Woodvil! — a man lurking in that room; he ruſhed upon me. He is come to raviſh the whole family: it could be for nothing elſe. I fainted at the ſight of him.

WATCHIT.

He did the ſame to me, Madam, and here is the wolf in ſheep's cloathing! Sir William, Madam, it was he——

Sir WILLIAM.

I a wolf in ſheep's cloathing!

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Yes, now I look at him, it was he.

WATCHIT.

He came upon me, like a deſtroyer of innocence, and you ſaw me (*crying*) ſtruggling in defence of my dear, dear virtue.

Sir WILLIAM.

Out of their ſenſes! ſtark mad! they are bewitched, and bedevilled, I think.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You wicked man to go to deny it! He attacked mein the moſt furious manner.

WATCHIT.

Yes, and me too, like a tyger, or a mountain bear.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

Get a dark room and a bed of ſtraw for 'em both.

WOODVIL.

Sir William, this is a ſerious matter: what can I think of it?

Sir WILLIAM.

That it is all falſe, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

It is all too true.

WATCHIT.

You ſaw him offering violence to me. *(crying)*

Sir WILLIAM.

Confuſion! I tell you it was not ſo.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I ſay it was ſo.

WATCHIT.

And ſo do I.

Sir WILLIAM.

But I tell you, no.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

And I tell you, yes.

WATCHIT.

And I ſay, yes, yes, yes.

Sir WILLIAM.

No,—damnation!—no.

All ſpeaking together.

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

Why do you all ſpeak at once?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Hear me, Mr. Woodvil.

WATCHIT.

Let me tell you——

Sir WILLIAM.

No, let me explain——

WOODVIL.

Diſtraction! will you have patience?

All ſpeaking together.

WATCHIT.

He was here, lurking in this room.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No; he was lurking in the other room.

WATCHIT.

Madam; it was here.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

I tell you it was there.

Sir WILLIAM.

I ſay it was no where.

WATCHIT.

He fell firſt upon me.

Mrs. Woodvil.

He began with me.

Sir William.

I meddled with neither.

Watchit.

I was his firſt object. *(laughs aſide)*

Mrs. Woodvil.

You his object! hold you your tongue.

Woodvil.

Hold all your tongues.

Watchit.

I muſt ſpeak for my *vartue.* *(laughing aſide)*

Sir William.

Damnation! If you keep a mad houſe, Mr. Woodvil, why would not you tell me ſo?

Mrs. Woodvil.

Ay! you are found out. And this, my dear Mr. Woodvil, this is not the worſt of his treachery. He is married already, and wants now to——

Woodvil.

Married, Sir William?

Mrs. Woodvil.

I ſay married: I can prove it. He thinks it a pro-

profound ſecret, and he only wants to ſeduce your niece to her ruin. There is a friend for you!

WATCHIT. (*aſide and laughing*)

What a fine puzzle here is?

Sir WILLIAM.

Slander, calumny; I deny it all. I here declare—

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Don't hear him; he will deny this, like every thing elſe.

Sir WILLIAM.

Diſtraction! confuſion! will you hear me?

[*Watchit talks apart with Woodvil, and both laugh.*

Enter CLARISSA.

CLARISSA.

For Heaven's ſake, what is the matter?

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Oh! I am glad you are come: take care of yourſelf: he is no better than he ſhould be: he means to rob you of your innocence.

CLARISSA.

Madam, I can never think ſo ill of Sir William.

Sir WILLIAM.

Generouſly ſaid, and I thank you. You are the only one of ſenſe among them.

WOODVIL. (*aſide with Watchit*)

I underſtand it now: but huſh!—no explaining; let it take its courſe. [*Watchit and he laugh.*

CLARISSA.

Sir William is incapable of an improper action, I am ſure he is.

Sir WILLIAM. (*to Clariſſa*)

I adore you more than ever.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Watchit, what do you ſtand laughing there for? —Step hither; come forward, I ſay. Did not you tell me, Watchit, that Sir William is married?

WATCHIT.

Sir William married! I tell you! law! Ma'am— [*Burſts into a laugh.*

Mrs. WOODVIL.

She did tell me, and I know it to be true. You can be a general lover, Sir William:—Mr. Woodvil, "he has a ſeraglio of ladies; and though he "rails at his ſon, he has gone lately and married "one of his Madams, as privately as he could, and "he thinks nobody knows it."

Sir WILLIAM.

There again now!

WOODVIL.

What a buſtle ſhe has made! (*laughs*)

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Mr. Woodvil, it is no laughing matter: Watchit has told me all: it is juſt as ſhe ſays; " he has married " his Dulcinea, and all his pretended love in a mo- " ment for your niece, is only to deceive her, ruin " her, poor dear young girl."

Sir William.

All falſe, idle, abſurd: where are your witneſſes?

Mrs. Woodvil.

There, I thought you would be at that work. " The whole pariſh knows it: but tenants are cau- " tious, and huſh-money goes a great way." Does not it, Watchit?

Watchit.

I know nothing, Madam; I remember nothing; I underſtand nothing; but I believe I ſhall crack my ſides with laughing: ho! ho! ho!—— [*Exit.*

Sir William.

There; there; fled the pit!

Mrs. Woodvil.

But I ſhall bring her back.——My deareſt Mr. Woodvil, it is a ſerious affair: take care of your niece: it is for the good of your family that I give myſelf all this trouble. I'll bring the girl back this moment. [*Exit.*

Woodvil. (*laughing*)

Well, this is a curious miſtake.

Sir WILLIAM.

You allow it to be a miſtake ?

WOODVIL.

This ſtory of your marriage, I believe, is without foundation: but your behaviour to my wife, and what I ſaw with my own eyes between you and the maid——

Sir WILLIAM.

All a miſtake too: but tell me plainly, Sir; am I to underſtand by this, that you evade giving me an anſwer, or that you don't approve of my aſking your niece in marriage ?

WOODVIL.

I have not ſaid that. Win her if you can. That may ſhew that you have no unfair deſigns upon the reſt of my family. [*Exit laughing.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Deſigns upon his family ! I hope, Madam, that in your thoughts I am honourably acquitted.

CLARISSA.

Of every unfair deſign it is my duty to acquit you.

Sir WILLIAM.

You make me happy; much happier than you imagine. Theſe fooliſh people have plagued and perplexed me to that degree, I ſhall hardly have common ſenſe this week to come. But I ſhall have ſenſe enough to know your merit. Your uncle conſents; you

you heard him ſay ſo: and ſince our paſſion is mutual——

CLARISSA.

I ſhall ever reſpect you, Sir; but as to mutual paſſion——

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, it is too late to throw a veil over it. Conſider; you have acknowledged it.

CLARISSA.

I have acknowledged the ſentiments I feel in behalf of your ſon: muſt he be ruined, Sir?

Sir WILLIAM.

Never throw away a thought on him: if he is undone, he may thank himſelf. It would be unnatural in you to plead too much for him and the children of his marriage.

CLARISSA.

Indeed, Sir, if his children are not happy, I ſhall be miſerable. [*almoſt in tears.*

Sir WILLIAM.

She ſpeaks feelingly for him. *(aſide)*—Po! this is all miſtaken generoſity. What have you to do with the fellow? Leave him and his wife to repentance and their own miſery.

CLARISSA.

But if by coming into your family, I bring calamity on any part of it—

Sir WILLIAM.

You are not to anſwer for that: it is my act and deed.

CLARISSA.

Can I conſent that you ſhould extinguiſh the natural affections of a father? What a load of calumny muſt I take upon myſelf? The malice of the world will never ceaſe to perſecute me. Let me, therefore, entreat you; drop your preſent deſign: your eſteem is all I aſk: upon that my happineſs is grafted. Could you but know half of what I feel! my heart is ready to burſt in your preſence: it is fit you ſhould be informed —This heart, Sir——

Sir WILLIAM. *(aſide)*

She alarms me:—go on; proceed.

CLARISSA.

This heart—it is no longer at my diſpoſal.

Sir WILLIAM.

I know it: you have reſigned it generouſly: Mrs. Woodvil told me ſo; you have given away the poſſeſſion of it.

CLARISSA,

I have, Sir; and it is never to be recalled. Mine is not a ſudden turn of inclination: it is a paſſion, to which ſentiment gave birth; which reaſon approves, and gratitude makes a duty.

Sir

Sir WILLIAM. *(bowing reſpectfully and ſmiling)* Madam! you are too good: you do me too much honour.

CLARISSA.

If I could be ſure that you will always think ſo—

Sir WILLIAM.

Rely upon me: I am fixed, unalterably fixed.

CLARISSA.

And will you forgive your ſon?—Oh! Sir William, if I had power of utterance to tell you but the half of what paſſes here—*(laying her hand to her breaſt)* If I could explain to you the intereſt I take in Mr. Loveworth's welfare—*(turns aſide)* Generous, generous Loveworth!

Sir WILLIAM.

Tears!—her generoſity is ſomewhat ſingular. This warmth of ſympathy for a ſtranger——

CLARISSA.

I cannot help it. Can I think of wadeing into your family through the tears of a ruined ſon?

Sir WILLIAM. *(aſide)*

She has got the day: ſhe has conquered.——I can reſiſt no longer. You have ſoftened me in regard to the fellow, though he does not deſerve it. Since you will have it ſo, I give up the point. I will ſee my ſon; I will forget, I'll forgive his folly. He ſhall be de-

decently provided for. You ſhall have all the merit of bringing about this reconciliation. My whole family will be obliged to you. And now, ſince all your ſcruples are removed; promiſe me your conſent.

CLARISSA.

Thus much, Sir, I can venture to anſwer. See Mr. Loveworth; take him once more under your protection; reſtore him to your eſteem and regard; and as to his lady,—if her conduct gives her a claim upon your generoſity,—if ſhe has any of the true virtues of a wife to entitle her to favour,—only promiſe, when you have ſeen ſome proof of her merit, that you will then forgive her alſo,—do this, and I ſhall reverence you for the goodneſs you may extend to her.

Sir WILLIAM.

And then you promiſe me your hand? Do not heſitate.

CLARISSA.

When you have forgiven your ſon, and ſeen his lady, if you then perſiſt; if your reſolution does not change——

Sir WILLIAM.

Oh!—My reſolution can never change.

CLARISSA.

If you then continue in the ſame mind; if, when your family is ſettled, you think it proper to aſk me in marriage——

Sir

Sir WILLIAM.

You will then conſent.

CLARISSA.

You ſhall, in that caſe, judge for yourſelf.

Sir WILLIAM.

Odſbud! you have made me the happieſt of men. I ſhall be as young a bridegroom as George himſelf.

CLARISSA. (*aſide*)

I dread the end of all this.

Sir WILLIAM.

I have not words to thank you. You have made me—but I'll ſay no more——when I am thoroughly happy, I am wonderfully given to talk nonſenſe—— loll toll loll. (*ſings*)

Enter WATCHIT, Mrs. WOODVIL, *and* Mr. WOODVIL.

WATCHIT. (*laughing*)

Oh! gracious! I ſhall die with laughing.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Now, Mr. Woodvil, now walk in: now hear what Watchit has to ſay.

Sir WILLIAM.

Wounds! the old exploded ſtory again?

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Hear what the girl has to ſay.

Watchit.

I have nothing to ſay, Madam. Ho! ho! ho!

Mrs. Woodvil.

Nothing to ſay?

Woodvil.

No; nothing to the purpoſe. I underſtand the whole.

Sir William.

Your niece has conſented. She has impoſed certain conditions: I muſt ſee my ſon; ſhe inſiſts upon it, and I agree. It is all her goodneſs, and not his merit; and ſo I ſhall tell him.

Mrs. Woodvil,

And will you let your niece marry him?

Woodvil.

Do you be quiet. I am glad to hear this news, Sir William; and fortunately my friend George is now in the houſe.

Mrs. Woodvil.

In the houſe, and I not know it? How long has he been here?

Woodvil.

Po! no matter how long: ſince you are wrought

to

to this diſpoſition, Sir William——Watchit, deſire him to walk up ſtairs.

WATCHIT.

Yes, Sir. This is the luckieſt affair. [*Exit.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Mr. Woodvil, you are too precipitate.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Ay; precipitate indeed!

WOODVIL.

Will you diſobey the lady's commands? Clariſſa, enforce your authority. [*talks apart with Clariſſa.*

Sir WILLIAM.

Her commands are abſolute: let him come, ſince it muſt be ſo: ay, ay; let me ſee him.

CLARISSA. *(aſide to Woodvil)*

I tremble for the event.

Enter WATCHIT, *and* LOVEWORTH.

WATCHIT.

Mr. Loveworth, Sir.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

The very perſon I ſaw in the other room!

Sir WILLIAM.

There, there; ſhe is growing mad again!

Mrs.

Mrs. Woodvil.

Mr. Woodvil, if you will believe me———

Woodvil.

I can't believe you; truce with this abſurdity. Sir William, here is your ſon, Sir.

Loveworth.

To be thus admitted to your preſence—

Sir William.

You owe it entirely to that lady's goodneſs. She is the beſt friend you ever had; that I can tell you.

Loveworth.

I feel that truth too ſenſibly, and it ſhall be the endeavour of my life to convince her of my gratitude.

Mrs. Woodvil. (*looking at Loveworth*)

I am ſure it was he, whom I ſaw concealed in the room. (*aſide*)

Sir William.

If you are ever wanting in due reſpect to this lady, I ſhall quarrell with you again. For the preſent, I ſhake hands with you: and ſo all is well.

Mrs. Woodvil.

He is the very perſon. Watchit, I am ſure of it.

Watchit.

Never mind it now, Madam. Won't you ſee your ſon's lady, Sir?

Sir

Sir WIILLAM.

She is in the houſe too, I ſuppoſe.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

No; that ſhe is not: that could not be without my knowing it,

WATCHIT.

I beg your pardon, Ma'am; ſhe is in the houſe. Introduce her, Mr. Woodvil.

WOODVIL.

Come; Sir William; you agree to ſee her? [*To Sir William.*

Sir WILLIAM.

You are all in a violent hurry, methinks. Oh! George, if you had choſen ſuch a lady as this. (*pointing to Clariſſa*) Do you deſire me to ſee his wife?

CLARISSA.

I don't know how to ſpeak on this occaſion.—— Thus on my knees I beg forgiveneſs for all that's paſt.

Sir WILLIAM.

Nay, don't kneel to me: let me raiſe you.

CLARISSA.

No, Sir: I have offended, and this poſture is the fitteſt for me.

Sir WILLIAM.

How! how is this?

CLA-

CLARISSA.

I am the unfortunate perſon that raiſed you indignation againſt your ſon.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

How! how! what does ſhe ſay?

Sir WILLIAM.

Do I underſtand her? Mr. Woodvil,——is your niece my ſon's wife all this time?

WOODVIL.

That lady is your daughter in law. We have impoſed upon you, for the good of your family: It was the pious fraud of friendſhip, and you will excuſe it.

Sir WILLIAM. (*walking aſide*)

The young profligate has made a good choice, and robbed me into the bargain.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

This cannot be. She is your niece, Mr. Woodvil, is not ſhe?

WOODVIL.

It ſerved the purpoſe to call her ſo.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

At this rate, I have been impoſed upon all this time. You are all in a plot againſt me. I am kept in the dark, and never am to know any thing in this houſe.

LOVE-

LOVEWORTH. (*to Sir William*)

You will allow, Sir, that I have not wanted diſcernment to make a proper choice.

Sir WILLIAM. (*aſide*)

I have a mind to quarrell with him again.—I have been bamboozled in this buſineſs. Mr. Woodvil, I appeal to you: am I bound to——

WOODVIL.

Abſolutely: and now if you can aſk the lady in marriage, ſhe, I ſuppoſe, will perform her part of the contract.

Sir WILLIAM.

So! that's the trick, is it?

WOODVIL.

You cannot recede from your word.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

Did not you tell me, Watchit, that ſhe was in love with Sir William?

WATCHIT.

It was my miſtake; but you ſee her love does not go out of the family.

Mrs. WOODVIL.

You ſhall tell me every ſecret: you know more; I know you do. (*talks aſide to Watchit*)

Sir WILLIAM.

'Sdeath! I have expoſed myſelf, and they have put it out of my power to find fault. Wounds! I could be in a paſſion again——And yet I have made myſelf ridiculous, and ſo to avoid being laughed at—

CLARISSA.

You perceive my confuſion, Sir: I was drawn into this ſtratagem, and I hope——

Sir WILLIAM.

Well, well; you have deceived me; and after all, it is an agreeable deceit.—But, you baggage! I ſhall ſcold you heartily hereafter for the trick you have played me.

WATCHIT. *(aſide)*

He is not the firſt man, whom love has made a reaſonable creature.

Sir WILLIAM.

You coquette! you jilt! you falſe one! I'll lampoon you in all the London papers; I'll write a ballad againſt you.—Can you look me ſtreight in the face after what has paſſed between us? George, you have rivalled your father; but I have forgiven you. As ſhe has been a flame of mine, take care that you behave well to her.

WOODVIL.

I will anſwer for him.

Sir WILLIAM.

It is all for the beſt perhaps. Don't laugh at me, that is all I aſk. And in return, I will fairly own an honeſt truth: when we become the cenſors of other people, we make ſevere laws againſt ourſelves.

WOOD-

WOODVIL.

Which laws we break upon the firſt occaſion that offers.

Sir WILLIAM.

Even ſo, Sir: and for my part, I now ſee clearly, that the beſt way is, to attend, in the firſt inſtance, to our own infirmities: we ſhall learn from thence, to make due allowance for the failings of others.

CLARISSA, *comes forward.*

YOU ſee, good folks, true to the Drama's law,
From theſe light ſcenes the moral which we draw.
Look round through life, you'll find the maxim true,
Each blames in others, what himſelf will do.
Juſt as the Turk doth from all wine refrain,
And yet with opium ſtupifies his brain.
E'en here, I fear, here on this very night,
There are who rail, themſelves not always right.

Pray now above, amongſt you gods on high,
To whom ſo oft I lift a trembling eye;
For whom I ſtrain theſe tender lungs, ſtill willing
To let you hear a little for your ſhilling;
Is there no cenſor there amongſt you, pray,
Who blames each new-born folly of the day?
'Gainſt foreign lace who doth his thunders lance,
Yet runs his brandy from the coaſt of France?
Is there no Falſtaff, fed with plenteous ſtore,
Who having ſpace enough, ſtill pants for more?
And while ſix ſeats he fills with ample make,
Cries, what a deal of room theſe people take?

What num'rous ſwarms in thoſe mid rows abide,
Moles to themſelves, to others eagle-eyed!
Each ſees his neighbour's back with follies groan,
But never ſpies the budget on his own.

One inſtance more: amongſt you here i'th' Pit,
Are there no bards, who like an Inqueſt ſit
On murder'd plays, and rave, and fret, and foam,
And DAMN *this piece,—yet have a worſe at home?*

This piece no critic here muſt dare abuſe;
For I inſpir'd it, I the poet's MUSE! *
From you, ye fair, he merits ſome applauſe;
His ſcenes were written in your ſacred cauſe;
To guard from wither'd age your beauty's prize,
And bid on nature's laws your conqueſts riſe.

Me could he teach this circle how to charm,
And give the pow'r your boſoms to alarm;
'Twere the bright point, at which my thoughts aſpire:
What more were left to fan ambition's fire?
She triumphs here, to whom your favour's ſhewn:
"There if I grow, the harveſt is your own."

* The piece was written for Mrs. Yates, and acted on her benefit night, in the month of March 1764.

NEWS

News from Parnaſſus.

AN

INTRODUCTORY PIECE,

Performed at the

Opening of Covent-Garden Theatre

ON

MONDAY, the 23d of SEPTEMBER, 1776.

Tum canit errantem Permeſſi ad Flumina Gallum.

VIRG.

The PERSONS.

Boccalini,	Mr. Hull.
Rantwell, an Actor,	Mr. Lee Lewis.
Vellum, a Bookfeller,	Mr. Wilson.
Rebus, a Poet,	Mr. Quick.
Catcall, a Critic,	Mr. Whitfield.
Fitzfrolick, a Pantomime Poet,	Mr. Woodward.
La Fleur, Servant to Boccalini,	Mr. Wewitzer.
Two Chairmen.	

Scene Boccalini's *Lodgings.*

News from Parnaſſus.

A violent rapping at the Street-Door; from the oppoſite Side, enter

LA FLEUR.

DE people in dis country it is all mad—rap, rap, rap—knock a de houſe down! I wiſh I was again en Provence; (*more knocking at the door*) vat is you would have?—De law in dis country it give liberty; de liberty it is break a de head, break a de houſe, put Frenchman in de horſepond, vat you will. It is all mad for de news; (*more knocking*) and it will not wait till de news come. Ah ça, I muſt open door. (*opens the door, and peeps out*) Vat is you want?

PEOPLE *without.*

That odd mortal Boccalini, does he lodge here?

LA FLEUR.

Signior Boccalini, it does lodge here; but you cannot ſee him now; it has des affaires—(*holding the door, and ſtruggling*) it is not *viſible* to-day.

PEOPLE *without.*

We muſt ſee him; we muſt come in.

Enter RANTWELL *and* VELLUM.

RANTWELL.

Here's a foreigner without manners; won't let people in to pay a civil visit!

VELLUM.

We have business with the old critic.

LA FLEUR. *(struggling at the door)*

I will make fast a de door. Ah! ah! no more come in. Vat is you command?

RANTWELL.

Your master is a queer odd sort of a good kind of critic. Boccalini's advertisements from Parnassus are well known. He comes, we hear, with news from those regions, and we want to know what he has in his budget. Is not this he?

LA FLEUR.

Le voila! it is Monsieur. I am glad he is come; he understand your language, and will talk you himself.

Enter BOCCALINI.

BOCCALINI.

Your visit is early, gentlemen, and somewhat importunate.

LA

LA FLEUR.

It is *ſans ceremonie:* come in ſpite of *touts les diables.*

BOCCALINI.

La Fleur, do you ſtep and put my books in order.

LA FLEUR.

Volontier: de gentlemen will pay you Englis viſit: how d'you do?—Vat news?—and dat is all. *(ſings) Grand ſoleil*— [*Exit.*

BOCCALINI.

Your name, Sir?

RANTWELL.

Rantwell, at your ſervice: you may read it in capitals three times a week in the play-bills.

BOCCALINI.

An actor, perhaps?

RANTWELL.

Righty gueſſed.

BOCCALINI.

And you, Sir?

VELLUM.

My name is Vellum: a bookſeller, Sir; well known in the Row. To refuſe me admittance, would have been an error of the firſt impreſſion.

RANT-

RANTWELL.

And I know my cue when to enter. Well, Signior, you have news from Parnaſſus, we hear.

BOCCALINI.

Yes, Sir; to be publiſhed when I have arranged my materials.

RANTWELL.

Kind and obliging! We have had nothing from thoſe parts a long time. Our Poets ſeem to have dropped all correſpondence with the Muſes.

VELLUM.

Ay; and we bookſellers are almoſt reduced to the neceſſity of writing for ourſelves. Now, Sir, if you will let my paper have the firſt of your news——

RANTWELL.

A little criticiſm will do no harm in the beginning of our theatrical ſeaſon.

BOCCALINI.

Patience, gentlemen. Seneca, Epictetus, and other philoſophers, have given me ſome papers of patience-powder, of more efficacy than all your quack medicines.

RANTWELL.

"The labour we delight in phyſicks pain." The truth is our poets are become news-writers, and the bookſellers are grown quacks.

VEL-

VELLUM.

Yes, there are bookſellers enough to put off your powders, and you may adverti ſe in my paper. In the mean time, Sir, your news.

RANTWELL.

Ay, true or falſe, give us the news.

BOCCALINI.

Why muſt you both ſpeak at once?

RANTWELL.

I hate to be ſilent in a ſcene.

BOCCALINI.

But the ſcene can't go on, if you won't hear. This gentleman excites my curioſity. (*looking at Vellum*) You print a newſpaper?

VELLUM.

I do, Sir.

BOCCALINI.

A newſpaper is an extraordinary manufacture, but I can form no idea of the proceſs. Bees make wax; worms produce ſilk; and ſpiders weave their webs: but what kind of animals engender a newſpaper is beyond my ſkill.

VELLUM.

You foreigners know nothing of the matter: we owe it all to liberty. How do you think it is done?

Boc-

BOCCALINI.

News from all parts of the kingdom! private intelligence from families! accounts from every quarter of the globe!—I ſuppoſe, to do all this, you have correſpondents abroad, who may be depended upon. If a ſudden event happens in a private family, they to be ſure give you notice.

VELLUM.

Not a tittle of this. A printing-houſe is like a bee-hive: ſome drones there are; the buſy fly and buzz abroad in a morning, and return loaded at noon: but they never bring enough; we ſupply the reſt. Troops in America! a letter from thence is writ in my garret. We have in the Merchants Directory, a full liſt of all the principal names in the city. Now in a dearth of news, we ſend half a ſcore to Tunbridge, another flight to Margate; a third group to Brighthelmſtone. We rob this man on the high-way; we kill another at a city-feaſt; and we ſtop payment for a great houſe, juſt as we like.

BOCCALINI.

And all falſe?

VELLUM.

Every ſyllable.—At the St. James's end of the town, we uſed to be hard put to it: but difficulties are now removed; their names are all on the ſtreet doors; we take them down in our liſt, and then deal with them as we like. We ruin the eldeſt ſon at play, and ſometimes ſhoot him: we raviſh the daugh-

daughter, put the mother to bed with the coachman, hang the father up in the ſtable, and make a Lord ſteal half a dozen tea-ſpoons out of a ſilver-ſmith's ſhop.

BOCCALINI.

Don't you obſerve ſome degree of probability in your ſtories?

VELLUM.

Oh! no; the incredible goes down beſt in this country.

BOCCALINI.

But won't the falſehood be found out?

VELLUM.

After ſome noiſe; our end is anſwered firſt.—A newſpaper, Sir, is a great ſchool of ſcience: moſt of the modern authors have never been at any other. With a good genius for lying, a tolerable ſtock of malice, a ſtore of envy, and not a grain of literature, they write in the Journals for three or four years; then ſet up for men of great talents, and from their garrets, or the Fleet, come forth novels, hiſtories, plays, eſſays upon ſpirit and matter, whole reams in praiſe of themſelves, and a torrent of abuſe againſt every ſpecies of merit.

BOCCALINI.

But the plough is defrauded by this.

VELLUM.

That may be: the ſtaining of paper is our object. Now to give you a true idea of the matter; no man can go out of town; or ſtay at home; or pay his tradeſmen, or not pay 'em; live or die, be or not be;

be; marry or continue ſingle; no lady can look handſome, be a good wife, a virtuous daughter, or an affectionate mother, but we in our paper turn all topſey turvey, right or wrong, true or falſe, no matter for that; we kill the living, bring the dead to life, and repreſent all juſt as we pleaſe.

BOCCALINI.

And poor truth all this time!

VELLUM.

Have a regard for truth, and ſtarve by it. The paper would be a blank: truth would not fill half a column of the paper. And ſo, if you pleaſe, there's room enough for your news from Parnaſſus: a good budget of ſcandal will have a run. I'll ſtand the brunt.

BOCCALINI.

And will you venture to publiſh defamation?

RANTWELL.

I think it's my cue to ſpeak now. I have been ſilent long enough I think. As to my friend little Vellum, he will dare any thing: his name is well known in Weſtminſter-hall.

VELLUM.

Yes, pretty well, I think. Two verdicts againſt me laſt Term; an Information to be tried next, and only for ſaying that a man of quality has got his mother with child.

BOCCALINI.

Such a trifle as that?

VELLUM.

I ſaid no more. But I laugh at law: I hate the King's Bench; and they know it: "woe to my Lord Chief Juſtice." I ſtood in the pillory two years ago.

BOCCALINI.

Indeed!

VELLUM.

I did: nothing in it. I told the mob in hand-bills that the liberty of the preſs was in danger; and they huzza'd, like the Portugueze at the burning of a Jew. The pelting was but ſlight.

BOCCALINI.

But the diſgrace! does any body ſpeak to you after it?

VELLUM.

They admire you: I went to the coffee-houſe without waſhing the eggs off my face. Look ye; you can't have a better publiſher: ſecrecy warranted; never give up an author; you may murder characters, and compliment yourſelf juſt as you pleaſe in my Journal.

BOCCALINI.

I underſtand you: Parnaſſus is invited to a ſhare in ſcandal and malevolence: you ſhall have my anſwer preſently. And now, a word with this gentleman.

RANT-

RANTWELL.

Ay, you have kept me here a long time, without a ſpeech; and that, let me tell you, is the hardeſt thing in acting.

BOCCALINI.

Then you ſhould ſtudy it. But come; you are an actor, and you profeſs to pleaſe?

RANTWELL.

Yes, Sir; I profeſs to pleaſe, and it is cruel in any newſpaper to ſay, I don't pleaſe. If idleneſs, or a party to Salt-hill, or a quarrel with the Manager, hinders me from ſtudying my part, why ſhould any ſcribbler inform the world of it? If I don't like my wife, or if I like another man's wife better, why is a printer, a dirty, ſnivelling, ſneaking fellow, like Vellum there—

VELLUM.

If you go to that, ſhall a paltry player——

RANTWELL.

A paper and type raſcal!

VELLUM.

A king of ſhreds and patches!

RANTWELL.

A mere bundle of fools-cap!

VELLUM.

A bluſtering, ranting, ſpouting——

RANT-

RANTWELL.

A duodecimo of waſte paper.

BOCCALINI.

Nay! friends but this moment, and now—

RANTWELL.

Let him give up the point then. Shall ſuch a fellow as that dine upon my follies? I hope, Signior, that you have an advertiſement from Parnaſſus, ordering, in the name of Apollo, that no newſpaper ſhall ſay a word of us, who depend upon pleaſing the public.

BOCCALINI.

And what ſay you of thoſe who profeſs to ſerve the public?

RANTWELL.

Why, as we very often pleaſe nobody but ourſelves, ſo your Miniſters as often ſerve nobody but themſelves; and therefore with quack doctors, money lenders, and lottery offices, they are all fair game.

VELLUM.

I like to hear actors talk of pleaſing the public!

RANTWELL.

Do you compare newſpapers to a theatre?

VELLUM.

Do I?—What do we print lies for but to pleaſe the public?

RANTWELL.

Print no lies of us: but come, let us hear your news: as Sir Harry ſays, the news! tell me news.

VELLUM.

If you don't tell, I'll invent news for you.

RANTWELL.

And now I think on't; Roſcius, you know, has left the ſtage; is not Shakeſpeare hugely angry?

BOCCALINI.

Angry?—At what?

RANTWELL.

At Roſcius, for retiring?

BOCCALINI.

No, Sir: Shakeſpeare retired himſelf to the banks of the *Avon*, and he wiſhes Roſcius a happy retreat on the banks of the *Thames*. Apollo has decreed him a laurel-crown for his ſervices, and has promiſed him a new wreath, ſhould he again appear for the theatrical fund, or upon any other occaſion.

VELLUM.

This is bad news.

BOCCALINI.

Why ſo?

VELLUM.

No abuſe in it: dull truth is a drug: I'll ſay in the

the paper, that Shakeſpeare never thought him a good actor: he prefered Betterton, and Booth, and—

BOCCALINI.

He ſays the reverſe, and calls him his beſt commentator.

RANTWELL.

What better than Booth, Wilkes, or Cibber?

BOCCALINI.

He was much obliged to them all: they ſprung from Betterton, as in ancient times, many Hercules's grew out of one. But Roſcius has reverſed it: out of many theatrical Hercules's he made one in his own perſon.

VELLUM.

This will never do. There will be no diſpute about this: no *pro and con:* and *pro and con* is the life of a newſpaper. Eſſays, letters, ſquibs, paragraphs, epigrams——

BOCCALINI.

Then it is your intereſt to be in the wrong?

VELLUM.

You have hit the mark. It is the intereſt of every newſpaper in England to be in the wrong. If I ſay alderman Guzzledown went a ſwan-hopping, and tumbled out of a city barge into the Thames, and when taken up, all help was too late; then alderman Guzzledown's friends are in a rage, and they come to my houſe, and "alderman Guzzledown, Sir, does

not underſtand"—and ſo then they put an anſwer in the paper, that he never went a ſwan-hopping at all, and I get ſomebody to abuſe the anſwer, with a hint about ſmuggling; and ſo a paper war goes on——

[*a rapping at the door.*

BOCCALINI.

More viſitors! if you will ſtep into the next room, gentlemen—whom have we here?

Enter REBUS.

RANTWELL.

Ha! little Rebus! Signior Boccalini, let me introduce my friend, Mr. Rebus, an admirable poet! He has writ a comedy. My dear Rebus, you are the man to revive a drooping ſtage. I hope you have a part for me. (*turns to Boccalini*) A poor ſentimental blockhead; I hope his play will never be received. My dear Rebus, if your piece comes out, you may depend upon me. Come, Vellum, they want to be buſy.

VELLUM.

If your play comes out, ſend the plot to my paper. You may praiſe yourſelf there, as much as you will: and I'll take care to abuſe you.

[*Exit with Rantwell.*

BOCCALINI.

You are a dramatic author, Sir?

RE-

REBUS.

I am Sir. My firſt puſh will be in comedy.

BOCCALINI.

And for this I ſuppoſe you have prepared yourſelf by an accurate ſtudy of men and manners: you have attended to the humours that gather in the mind, and the tinge thoſe humours are apt to give to the imagination. You have purſued affectation through all her ſhapes, and can open with a nice hand the vien of the ridicule that ſprings from that ſource. You have ſeen life, you know the foibles of the fair; the turns of vanity, pride, love, extravagance, and all the whims of faſhion. You know the relative duties of life, and——

REBUS.

At that rate, when ſhould I begin to write my comedy?

BOCCALINI.

At Athens they were forbid before the age of thirty. I make no doubt, but you have digeſted Ariſtole, and all the rules of your art.

REBUS.

A man might as well ſtudy the mathematicks. I truſt all to genius: the managers have enlarged the houſe: it holds more money than ever, and that is provocation enough for me.

BOCCALINI.

Will that do? A painter ſtudies the principles of deſign and colouring before he takes a pallet.

REBUS.

Look ye, Sir: you ſaw that fellow Vellum that went out there?—I wrote for five years in his paper. And that fellow, Rantwell, who is gone with him, he ſupplied me with orders to ſee the play. A bitter bad actor! he ſhall never ſpeak a line of mine. I have attended the firſt night at all new plays; I have watched effect; obſerved where the audience applauded; gave the plot in the papers, abuſed every ſucceſsful writer, and now have turned one of my own novels into a comedy. No wit, no humour in it!

BOCCALINI.

No?

REBUS.

Wit and humour are good for nothing but to make people laugh.

BOCCALINI.

A new notion this: what's your ſubject?

REBUS.

You ſhall hear:—My notion is that there ſhould be found doctrine throughout; in every ſcene good and generous ſentiments; riſing in a climax to ſome uſefull moral in every act.—Now obſerve—my firſt act ends with "honour your father and mother." II Act, "love your neighbour as yourſelf."—III. Act, "do as you would be done by"—IV. Act, "charity covers a multitude of ſins"—V. Act, "God ſave the king"—No audience can hiſs ſuch ſentiments.

Boc-

BOCCALINI.

They might as well hiſs "the practice of piety."

REBUS.

Juſt the ſame: my play is pathetic——

BOCCALINI.

A pathetic comedy?——

REBUS.

Yes, a pathetic comedy! the ſtory is ſhortly this. Sophy Goodchild is an amiable girl: ſhe has many lovers; Luteſtring, a mercer's prentice; Capias, an attorney's clerk; and Jack Indigo, a young merchant.—Her father was formerly church-warden, now old, poor, and ſtarving! he has not a morſel to eat. Sophy Goodchild ſees a baker's ſhop: ſhe reſolves, but after many ſoliloquies, to ſteal a two-penny loaf for her father. The young attorney ſees her in the fact, and being croſſed in love, he informs. Sophy is carried before Mr. Juſtice Locuſt. Mr. Juſtice Locuſt is a wine-merchant, who ſells bad law, and adulterate port to the whole pariſh. Miſs Sophy is brought before him: ſhe weeps; confeſſes the fact, and is committed to Newgate. Mr. Juſtice Locuſt makes out a warrant for the father, for receiving ſtolen goods, knowing them to be ſtolen: young Indigo takes their part, and young Indigo's father, whoſe whole delight in his counting houſe is to do good, raiſes a ſubſcription to make Sophy's defence. She is brought to her trial, and her father with her. She makes a ſpeech; the jury cry, and both are acquitted, ſhe marries young Indigo, and his father

ſettles his whole fortune upon them, which you know is very generous and improbable: and ſo the audience go away crammed with ſentiment, and highly delighted with ſo pathetic a piece.

BOCCALINI.

Have the Managers received this comedy?

REBUS.

No; they are inſolent; but till they comply, I ſhall abuſe them, and every thing they produce.

BOCCALINI.

Had not you better turn your comedy into a tragedy?

REBUS.

No, no; I have a tragedy upon the ſtocks. An Eaſtern ſtory. I call it Nuncomar.—Nuncomar has forged the bond of Malachi Doſs, and ſo contrives to poſſeſs himſelf of his whole fortune, as ſoon as Malachi Doſs dies. Malachi Doſs has left a daughter, ſecretly in love with Gungabaſſen——Gungabaſſen fetches a walk at midnight near the *Adawlut*, with an *arzee* in his hand. The ghoſt of Malachi Doſs appears, and being of the Gentoo religion, gives a fine awfull relation of the Metempſychoſis. The ghoſt diſcovers the whole fraud, and how he lent his ſeal to be put to an *arzee*, to be ſent to the Nabob, NUTCHUM AL DOWLA, under whom Malachi Doſs had a *forjedurree*. Gungabaſſen tells all to the young princeſs; the intereſt grows warm, and Nuncomar is ſent to priſon: his wife is in great affliction, and this again heightens the diſtreſs. Nuncomar breaks out of the priſon

priſon into the council room, and claims the privilege of an ambaſſador as *Vakeel* to the Nabob: then follow ſome ſpeeches about the rights of ambaſſadors, and the ſtatute of queen Ann is put into blank verſe. In the midſt of things the Nabob comes with all his whole army: a battle is fought and won: Nutchum al Dowla is brought in priſoner upon an elephant: Nuncomar is executed, and his wife, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt, mounts the funeral pile, which is lighted up on the ſtage, and ſo the play concludes, with a moral againſt forgery, highly uſefull in a commercial country.

BOCCALINI,

Will the audience underſtand it?

REBUS.

Not a ſyllable: they'll ſtare like ſtuck pigs: I like to ſee 'em ſtare at a tragedy. And then by culling from Shakeſpeare a parcel of obſolete words——

BOCCALINI.

Obſolete words in dialogue, that ſhould be natural?

REBUS.

Yes, it is the rule for ſupporting the diction, in all poetry; particularly with reſpect to the drama. I ſhall give my countrymen ſomething beyond the reach of malice. *(loud rapping at the door)*

BOCCALINI.

Hey! more viſitors!

RE-

REBUS.

Well, I can ſtep into the next room. I ſhall finiſh my tragedy. Nuncomar will make 'em ſtare: with *ſmart imps*, and *dapper elves*, and *goblins* of the night, and the *nurſing hours* of the morning, I ſhall make work for them. (*repeats*)

Here Nuncomar with NIPONS from the Weſt,
There Gungabaſſen marſhals all his NAIMANS;
And ſits aloft in thunder and in clouds!
Hey!—little Rebus will do it! [*Exit.*

Enter CATCALL.

CATCALL.

Ha! old boy!

BOCCALINI.

Your name, Sir?

CATCALL.

Catcall: a critic; and as you are of the ſame trade, I am come to have a little talk with you.

BOCCALINI.

Upon what ſubject?

CATCALL.

The reformation of theatrical abuſes.

BOCCALINI.

The true province of criticiſm!

CAT-

CATCALL.

Yes, Sir: I was born a critic. I hiſſed the moment I ſaw the light. I rejected all play-things, till a catcall was put into my hand: that delighted me. When I took to my horn-book, the firſt letters I learned were, D, A, M, N, which make the word *Damn* you know. From ſchool, I came upon town; lounged at coffehouſes, read magazines, laid down the laws of the drama at George's, and pronounced upon wit at the Bedford.

BOCCALINI.

Good materials for a critic! now to the point.

CATCALL.

If you pleaſe, Sir: the matter is this. The Managers are grown inſolent; now I ſhall ſet my face againſt all inſolence.

BOCCALINI.

Proceed, Sir.

CATCALL.

Time was, I could go into the boxes and ſee an entire act of a play for nothing. At the cloſe of the act, the box-keeper came in, "I hope your honour likes the piece, and if you ſtay,"—Stay, ſays me I,—to ſee a play murdered? Up I get, and bruſh away to the other houſe, and there do the ſame. Now this good ancient cuſtom has been ſome how taken away. It muſt be revived. I know a cabinet-maker that has no buſineſs; I know a diſcontented maſter-taylor, who can bring all his journeymen into the upper-gal-

gallery. We ſhall call ourſelves the town. No trifling with our rights. And now, Sir, I hope that you will by an edict from Parnaſſus revive the good and ancient privilege of ſeeing an act at each houſe for nothing.

BOCCALINI.

And is this all you have to complain of?

CATCALL.

No, no, have patience; this is not all. The town has been abridged of many privileges. For inſtance now; after ſeeing two acts, without paying a farthing, it then draws near to half price, you know. Then ſuppoſing me willing to pay, I could march behind the ſcenes; ſee all their thunder and lightning; ſtrut into the Green-room, and by talking to the performers make them all forget their parts, and then, lolling with a janty air againſt the ſide of the ſcene, hiſs the actors for their negligence, and laugh the ladies in the boxes out of countenance.

BOCCALINI.

This muſt make great confuſion.

CATCALL.

Charming confuſion!—A babel of ſounds. Off cries the pit; throw him over ſays the gallery; muſick; a hornpipe, prologue; roaſt beef. All this is loſt now.

BOCCALINI.

And this is what you would reſtore?

CAT-

CATCALL.

I fear we ſhall not be able to carry the point: but it will breed a riot, and that, you know, is rare ſport. [*a rap at the door.*

Enter LA FLEUR.

BOCCALINI.

What is the matter now?

LA FLEUR.

De gentleman in de chair. He will not come out. He has great myſtery; and ſo de chair it muſt be carry in here.

BOCCALINI.

As he pleaſes. Mr. Catcall, there is company in that room to entertain you.

CATCALL.

Let us firſt diſcuſs——

BOCCALINI.

Sir, my time——

CATCALL.

And, Sir, my time is precious.

BOCCALINI.

You ſee I am not at leiſure.

CAT-

CATCALL. *(retiring)*

A word, and I have done.

BOCCALINI.

How inconſiderate! leave me now.

[*Exit Catcall.*

(A Chair is brought in)

I. CHAIRMAN.

Will I lave the chair in the hall here?

II. CHAIRMAN.

What better place? Did not the gentleman deſire it? Ow! come along, man.

[*Exeunt Chairmen.*

BOCCALINI.

What can this mean?

FITZFROLICK. *(looking out of the chair)*

By ourſelves, I hope.

BOCCALINI.

The coaſt is clear, you ſee.

FITZFROLICK.

Then I'll venture out. *(comes out of the chair; a large red cloak on him, and a tie wig.)*

BOCCALINI.

By his appearance this ſhould be a doctor of phyſick.

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

No, Sir, I have no *noſtrums:* my name is Fitzfrolick.

BOCCALINI.

And your profeſſion?

FITZFROLICK.

A pantomime poet.

BOCCALINI.

A pantomime poet! what may that be?

FITZFROLICK.

You may well aſk: the ancients had but an imperfect notion of it: I can tell the whole ſtory of Ovid's Metamorphoſis better than Ovid himſelf.

BOCCALINI.

Better than Ovid! is the Engliſh a better language than the Latin?

FITZFROLICK.

We never uſe any language. Significant dumb ſhew is our method. How would you tell a man, without ſpeaking, to bring you ſome cherries? (*mimicks*) Nuts? (*mimicks*) Does any language come up to that?

BOCCALINI.

The critics can't find fault with your ſtile: pray, Sir, how did you attain this excellence?

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

I was bred a carpenter.

BOCCALINI.

A carpenter!

FITZFROLICK.

Yes: I built a booth for a puppet-ſhew-man in the country, and ever ſince I have been a dealer in pantomime. I have made all the heathen gods and goddeſſes. The chairs, that danced a jig in *Diocleſian*, were my handy work.

BOCCALINI.

An ingenious contrivance!

FITZFROLICK.

A better ſet of actors were never put out of hand. I have been a ſlave to the drama ever ſince, and I have ſuffered much inconvenience in the cauſe. Would you believe it? I have never been able to ſtay a week in any one lodging for theſe twenty years.

BOCCALINI.

Why ſo?

FITZFROLICK.

I practiſe all my pieces at home. The life of pantomime, you know, conſiſts in the eſcapes of Harlequin. I have bored holes in the doors and wainſcott in every houſe I could get into. I once got into a ſad ſcrape. Pantaloon was in purſuit of me—that is you muſt ſuppoſe ſo—I jumped through the wainſcott,

ſcott, and tumbled into my landlady's bed; but that ſulky ſcoundrel her huſband baſtinado'd me, till I thought I never ſhould take a leap again. I have been practiſing all the morning: ecce ſignum!

[*throws off his long cloak, puts on a maſk and appears in a harlequin-dreſs.*

BOCCALINI.

A quick metamorphoſis!

FITZFROLICK. *(friſks about)*

I may unmaſk to you. I have been practiſing a new pantomime. "Harlequin Argonaut, or the Golden Fleece." I ſhall lower the ſtage; make a fine baſon; get the New River company to turn in their water; and then I ſhall launch a ſhip, and ſail away for Colchos.

BOCCALINI.

But why real water in ſcenes merely artifical?

FITZFROLICK.

I'll tell you: I tried it with a canvaſs-ſea; but while the men were turning the wheels to give undulation to the drapery of the water, I fell in and almoſt broke my rib againſt the ſharp corner of a wave. So I intend to have real water.

BOCCALINI.

But in real water you may chance to be drown'd

FITZFROLICK.

No, no; that can't be. The ſociety for curing drowned perſons is to attend in the front boxes. I

ſhall fail away, do you ſee, for Colchos, and upon my arrival fire a broadſide at the caſtle, ſilence their guns, and——

BOCCALINI.

Guns! they were not in uſe.

FITZFROLICK.

Oh! harlequin deals with the devil you know. I meet Medea on the ſhore, and take her that night to Vauxhall.

BOCCALINI.

Vauxhall in thoſe days?

FITZFROLICK.

I am maſter of my own creation. I then take her to the Boulvards at Paris; give her a Dutch fair upon the ice;---I make my ice of tin.---Pantaloon, her father, with a long noſe, a grey beard, and a knife in his hand, purſues me: præſto paſs, I have a baſket on my ſhoulder. "Buy any muffins? Muffins for "coffee and tea, gentlemen and ladies."

BOCCALINI.

Nothing of this in Ovid.

FITZFROLICK.

My changes are more wonderful than his. My wit is full as ſurprizing: though, I think, my wit is not above five feet high at preſent.

BOCCALINI.

Wit five feet high!

FITZ-

FITZFROLICK.

No; I could ſpring ten-feet formerly; but a five bar gate is the height of my wit at preſent.

BOCCALINI.

So! you are vulnerable in the heel?

FITZFROLICK.

Yes, Achilles for that. I ſhall give great variety. I have hunted all the ſigns in London for animals that never exiſted: I ſhall give 'em all. ASTLEY ſhall ride his horſe; a Turk ſhall mount the rope; I have ſpoke to the ſtationer for a large quantity of ſnow, and you will have oſtriches, ſerpents of the Nile, the Ægyptian pyramids, and I change myſelf to a Mummy.

Enter all the former Characters.

RANTWELL.

Hey! that fellow intrude himſelf here!

REBUS.

That enemy of wit!

RANTWELL.

He never gives me a line to ſpeak.

CATCALL.

Turn him out.

VELLUM.

A ſcoundrel that never prints his works!

OMNES.

Turn the fellow out. (*Fitzfrolick runs about, and leaps through a window*)

BOCCALINI.

I am glad to be rid of him. I have no rules for his ſpecies of the drama. And now, gentlemen, you ſhall, in your turns, hear the decrees of Apollo and the muſes. The public ſhall have them ſoon in my old way; in the form of advertiſements from Parnaſſus. In the mean time, to our preſent purpoſe. Mr. Vellum——

VELLUM.

I will print for you in a good type.

BOCCALINI.

Liſten, Sir, if you pleaſe. A year's collection of newſpapers has been peruſed by Momus, and he has made his report. They exceed in bulk all the writings of antiquity put together, and they make a curious medley. The works of the ancients were called the phyſick of the ſoul: modern newſpapers are the poiſon. Apollo leaves the ſuperintendance of this matter to Engliſh juries. He ſays, when a ſet of libertines, from the people called the LOCRIANS, broke into a temple, after a night's carouſal, and defiled the altar; an edict was paſſed at ATHENS declaring it lawful for the LOCRIANS to defile the temples: In like manner, Parnaſſus allows the newſpapers to traduce

and vilify whom they think fit. The temples in Greece continued ſacred, in ſpite of indecency; and the valuable character may bid defiance to ſcurrility.

VELLUM.

Look into Poets Corner next Saturday for an epigram upon yourſelf.

BOCCALINI.

Mr. Rantwell, you profeſs to pleaſe; ſtudy to do it. Let actors write no verſes on themſelves; no paragraphs againſt their rivals; avoid frivolous diſpute, and attend to their buſineſs. If the waſps of the newſpapers bite and ſting, remember that thoſe little envenomed animals are generally moſt buſy in the ſunſhine.

RANTWELL.

I'll tell this in the Green-room: It may do ſome good.

BOCCALINI.

Mr. Rebus, a comedy was meant to be the mirror of life. "The proper ſtudy of mankind is man." True comedy ſerves that purpoſe: it helps to develope the diſcriminations of character, and to laugh folly out of countenance. Pathetic comedy is a mere ſubſtitute for wit, humour, and the powers of ridicule. Fuſtian tragedy is another ſubterfuge. Shakeſpeare wrote naturally: his language, in all his beautiful paſſages, is the language of this hour. Why ſhould you write, as if you was born two hundred years ago? The antique caſt is a mere trick in writing. Imitate nature; be ſimple, without meanneſs; adorn-

adorned, without oſtentation; touch the heart, and that is your ſure road to ſucceſs.

REBUS.

I appeal to poſterity.

FITZFROLICK. (*in the chair.*)

Any directions for me?

OMNES.

Hey!—Is he here again?

BOCCALINI.

There is no keeping him out, I ſee.

CATCALL.

He ſhall decamp for all this: here, call in the chairmen.

Enter Chairmen; as they are going to take up the chair, it flies open, and diſcovers an Apothecary's ſhop; an Alligator comes out; Harlequin is dreſſed as a Quack Doctor. The Alligator moves about the ſtage.

CATCALL.

What monſter have we here?

REBUS.

A deſcription of it in good blank-verſe will do well in a tragedy.

VELLUM.

I ſhould like a print of it for the next Magazine.

RANT-

RANTWELL.

"An alligator ſtuft: a beggarly account of empty boxes."

BOCCALINI. (*when the alligator ſtops.*)

Mr. Fitzfrolick, this is a ſpecimen of your talents. Your ſpecies of compoſition eludes all precept. Will a little common ſenſe do you any kind of harm?

FITZFROLICK.

Shall I be plain with you? I have tried various ſhapes to gratify my maſters. An old ſervant, Sir! within the limits of common ſenſe, I hope, my endeavours have not been always unworthy. I have occaſionally been prodigal enough to depart from nature; but I have had the grace to return. To pleaſe has been my ambition; and ſometimes truſting to my HEAD, and ſometimes to my HEELS, I have reached the chearful evening of life; and if my patrons will now and then continue to beſtow a ſmile, it will chear me on the reſt of my way.

BOCCALINI.

Fairly ſpoken, and I dare ſay you will have your wiſh. Mr. Catcall, a word with you, Sir. Baniſh noiſe and riot: let critics have knowledge and candour. A true ſon of Apollo has well obſerved, that the firſt office of criticiſm was to beat time to the chorus of the muſes, not with clamour and violence to interrupt the ſong. Let audiences ſupport the decorum of the theatre. Let the managers procure novelty, by a due encouragement of genius. If new plays of value cannot be had, let them revive the old, but be ſparing of alterations. They may lop

lop excreſcencies, and remove indecency; but the form in which the fathers of the drama left their works, ſhews their own frame of thought, and ought to be reſpected. In a word, let Managers conſider themſelves at the head of a great warehouſe; procure the beſt aſſortment of goods, get proper hands to diſplay them; open their doors, be civil to the cuſtomers, and, Apollo foretells that the generoſity of the public will reward their endeavours. [*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF VOL. IV.

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